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John Baldwins
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J. Baldwin ~

CLIO:

OR, A

DISCOURSE

ON

TASTE.

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ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

By I. U.

The THIRD EDITION,
With large ADDITIONS.

LONDON,
Printed for T. DAVIES, in Ruſſel-ſtreet,
Covent-Garden. MDCCLXXII.

PREFACE

PREFACE.

FROM the time Mr. Locke proved that there were no innate principles, or rules to direct the actions of men, imprinted on the mind, taſte, morality, and conſcience were ſuppoſed by many perſons of learning, particularly by all the conſiſtent followers of the modern philoſophy, to have no determined foundation in nature, but cuſtom, or elſe the apparent intereſts of men, diſcovered by inveſtigation and compariſon of effects. There appeared in that philoſophy but one common firſt motive, or ſource of

determination and action to man and brute; and the human divine mind was only conſidered, as endued with a greater capacity, or with a ſuperiority in degree, but not in kind. Of theſe conſequences, ſcepticiſm, infidelity, and materialiſm, made advantages, which probably Mr. Locke did not foreſee; or could not, conſiſtent with his general hypotheſis, avoid.

Although it be demonſtrable, that man has no innate rules of actions imprinted on his memory, yet can we agree, that he has no innate feeling of the ſacred character of truth and rectitude of heart, no ſenſe of beauty, no infelt diſtinction between the baſe and the generous, which ought by philoſophers to be ſubſtituted to the innate principles which Mr. Locke juſtly

juſtly diſcarded? The uniformity of the judgments of mankind throughout all ages, and the ſtrong involuntary ſentiments we all feel in the preſence of virtue and beauty, prove that we have ſome ſtandard of approbation in the mind; and that for want of acknowledging it publickly, there is an *hiatus* or chaſm left in philoſophy, thro' which infidelity, ever reſtleſs, and ever ſeeking for ſecurity, creeps into ſeeming ſafety and peace.

In the following lines, I attempt to ſhew ſeveral taſtes that grow up with the human mind, and are found in every part of the ſpecies that are not evidently imperfect. To this general propoſition in the firſt edition of Clio, was objected, *The variety of mens opinions and taſtes*, copied from Locke and

Mandeville, in order to prove that men have no fixed taſte or direction of mind. The critic evidently had not an idea of the nature of evidence or proof; for even allowing his exceptions to be good, he ought only to conclude that there were limits to the natural taſtes of men; for indiſputably if the inſtances I produced of taſte be univerſal, then mankind have ſo far a fixed univerſal taſte. The method, and indeed the only method of overturning my poſition is, to ſhew that the inſtances I produce of univerſal taſte are not in truth common to all ages and nations; or that, although they be univerſal, yet that men came by ſome other means to agree to them, and not by mere natural ſentiment.

The

The objection I just mentioned obliged me in this edition to make the diſtinction between things that please us by their native beauty, and thoſe other objects that are naturally indifferent or diſguſting, and yet that come into value and reputation on account of an aſſociation they happen to be in with original beauty. I will take this opportunity of adding a reflection or two, to what is ſaid on this ſubject in the body of the work. The partition made by this diſtinction obviously accounts for, and reconciles, the remarkable ſtedfaſtneſs of the judgments of men in all ages in ſome matters, and the ſtrange fluctuation in their judgments concerning other matters. Objects poſſeſſed of native or unborrowed beauty taken ſeparately, always pleaſe us, while our organs are

ins indisposed; but the esteem men sometimes have for things naturally indifferent or disgusting, is only accidental, and their judgments concerning them must change, as the mode or fashion of association varies. The original cause of uniting ideas that are found so closely connected as not to be easily separated, is often unknown; and in such case, people are astray about the principle that guides their preferences. If we could trace the beginnings of associations, we should no doubt be able to point out the means by which the several fantastic modes of beauty came into esteem, as clearly as persons acquainted with history can tell us, why a neck a little awry was graceful in the camp of Alexander, and why a prominent hoop-petticoat was a genteel part of

dress

dress in the court of our virgin Elizabeth.

Now, if agreeable to the import of this little discourse, man without innate principles or rules of action imprinted on the mind, be enlightened and directed by innate sentiments, or intellectual tastes, then he has some fixed boundaries of judgment, some spring-heads of reasoning; he is singled out and distinguished from the brute by something more than mere capacity; he is born to involuntary approbations and duties, and the important philosophy of human nature hath a settled firm foundation. I thought proper to mention this consequence, that the matter here presented to the public may be discussed with the attention and accuracy it deserves; my

general

general view is, that the human mind after being neglected by the modern philosophy, may be restored to the rank due to its importance in learning, and that this rich and fruitful province may once more become the object of curiosity and enquiring genius.

I added the dialogue at the end, because I had a mind to make some reflections on the influence the Christian religion naturally has on the fine arts, and dialogue admits of rambling thoughts better than any other species of writing. I am sensible, that in a conversation between a gentleman and a lady, witty things are generally expected; but my reader will not find a single *bon mot* in this conversation. The Dean has no character, but that of a man who has attentively considered

dered human nature, and the genius of Chriſtianity; and Amelia is a lady of a very common character in life; ſhe is religious, an admirer of virtue, and a lover of liberty. I am not poſitive that my thoughts on ſociety and religion will not diſguſt ſeveral of my readers; but let me obſerve on my own behalf, that I did not write for the crowd. I offer my reflections to the few who are willing to beſtow a thought now and then on their own minds, and take a ſedate view of that picture, which it is the great art of life to hide from ourſelves, as well as from the world; if others read them, and take offence, I can't help it. Thoſe who require their paſſions to be flattered, may very well throw aſide this trifle; they have labourers enough

at work for them, gentle authors, who politely conſider the humour of the public before they write, and never put pen to paper before they calculate the number of their buyers.

I have nothing to add about the execution of the work, but to acknowledge its faults and imperfections: it is often obſcure, either thro' brevity or an ill choice of expreſſion. The parts were wrote ſeparate and looſe, and they remain ſo ſtill; they appear yet to be only materials collected and thrown rudely together; conſequently they leave not on the mind the full ſtrong impreſſion of a ſingle whole and regular plan. If I be aſked why I did not digeſt them better? I anſwer, that I am not obliged to do ſo, while I have

have other objects that require my time and attention. However imperfect this little piece be, I think it of some value, which is a sufficient apology for publishing it. If I lay open my fields, I am not bound to improve them, although improvements would add considerably to the pleasure of the walk, and to the variety of the prospect.

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CLIO.

OR, A

DISCOURSE on TASTE.

MADAM,

WHEN I had the honour of drinking tea with you a few days ago, and occasionally read to you Rollin's General Reflections upon what is called Good Taste, ſome obſervations you made brought on a very lively and pleaſing converſation, in which you opened ſo many new proſpects to me upon our ſubject, that I had thoughts of reducing my ideas to writing while they continued freſh in my memory, and you were pleaſed to approve of that deſign. Rollin, you obſerved, wrote for young ſtudents, and his principal view was to form a taſte for li-

terature. You very gracefully, but in a manner I did not then perceive, led me to that taſte and elegance which diſtinguiſhes perſons politely educated, and particularly to the graces of your own ſex: the tranſition, indeed, from the beauties of writing to the elegance and propriety diſplayed in poliſhed life, was not great: for the ſame ſimple original principles of taſte are common to both, and are varied only according to characters and their ſituations. It is a happy circumſtance in my favour, that the ſubject itſelf, and your approbation of my attempt, confine my thoughts to you; I have no neceſſity, madam, of invoking a muſe to inſpire me.

The taſte we ſpoke of may be defined, at large, a clear ſenſe of the noble, the beautiful, and the affecting, through nature and art. It diſtinguiſhes and ſelects, with unerring judgment, what is fine and graceful, from the mean and diſguſting; and

and keeping a ſtrict and attentive eye on nature, never neglects her, but when nature herſelf is in diſgrace;

All our ſpecies that are perfect bring the firſt principles of taſte with them into the world. Rollin produces inſtances of univerſal taſte in muſic and painting: "A concert, ſays he, that has all its parts well compoſed and well executed, both as to inſtruments and voices, pleaſes univerſally: but if any diſcord ariſes, any ill tone of voice be intermixed, it ſhall diſpleaſe even thoſe who are abſolutely ignorant of muſic. They know not what it is that offends them, but they find ſomewhat grating in it to their ears; and this proceeds from the taſte and ſenſe of harmony implanted in them by nature. In like manner a fine picture charms and tranſports a ſpectator who has no idea of painting. Aſk him what pleaſes him, and why it pleaſes him, and he cannot eaſily

give an account, or ſpecify the real reaſon; but natural ſentiment works almoſt the ſame effect in him, as art and uſe in perfect judges."

Here you ſtopped me with a very ſubtile and confounding objection, which became much ſtronger by your familliar and ſprightly manner of ſupporting it: though I did not then make a good figure in oppoſition to you, yet now I can venture upon paper to enforce the principle I defended. Your objection was, That whatever pleaſes people forms to them a true and agreeable taſte; and that therefore there is no ſuch thing as univerſal taſte in the beautiful, the ſublime, and the affecting; for that which pleaſes one perſon is often diſpleaſing to another: who then can pretend to judge between mankind, ſince no ſentence pronounced in this caſe can alter the taſtes of men, or make that agreeable to a perſon which diſ-

diſguſts him, or the contrary? Though this objection be certainly new from you, who have yet no acquaintance with books that treat on the nature of the human mind; yet it has often been made, very triumphantly, by writers of the greateſt reputation, and ſeems to require a more ſatisfactory ſolution than has hitherto appeared. It is no ſmall advantage to me, that the candour of your mind is not deſtroyed by what is often called learning. When I produce to you ſeveral well-known inſtances of univerſal invariable beauty, you will without heſitation agree with me that there is ſuch a thing: you will not contend, that mankind want a taſte for that which they all admire.

To proceed to particular inſtances of this natural ſenſe: Every man, who is not an idiot, has a taſte for truth; the moſt notorious liar on earth, when taken in a

falſhoood which he hopes to evade, ſhall convince you of his own private unalterable ſenſe by his palliations and excuſes.

The ſame thing may be ſaid of gratitude; and though the virtue itſelf be rare, yet no one ever in earneſt acknowledged himſelf to be ungrateful, or would willingly bear that imputation; which is ſufficient evidence that the approbation of the virtue is univerſal. The applauſe we yield to generoſity, and our contempt of a very ſelfiſh diſpoſition, is not leſs general, though there ſeem to be ſome objections. Miſers have been known to praiſe as well as practiſe the moſt ſordid parſimony, and to condemn generoſity; but I believe, upon conſidering this matter cloſely, it will appear that miſers, as well as others, have a ſenſe of the merit of generoſity; and find fault with it in others only where it affects

affects nearly or remotely their own intereſts, or becomes a reproach to them: they condemn liberality where it appears to them to laviſh beyond proper limits. The miſer admits the virtue equally with the generous, but his fears and ſuſpicions of future want make him confine it within a ſmall compaſs: he parts with his farthing where a more generous perſon beſtows a ſhilling or a guinea; yet this farthing extorted from him, is an indubitable proof that he has fixed a ſenſe of liberality, though it be reſtrained by ſome mean and ſelfiſh conſiderations.

Liberty is pleaſing, and confinement diſguſtful to every body. You can walk and breathe freely under a low cieling, what then makes you prefer a loftier chamber? What makes you, if the weather permit, like the open air beſt, and chuſe to be bounded only by the horizon,

that extends in proſpect as far as the eye can reach?

Novelty alſo hath its charms in a thouſand inſtances, that wear away by familiarity.

All ages and nations have agreed to admire true wit; it is certain that witticiſm, pun, mimickry, and buffoonery, have very often ſupplied the place of it with applauſe; but when we conſider, that all people who make uſe of falſe wit, notwithſtanding admire the true, and approve of it; that they put off the falſe wit always under ſome reſemblance or appearance of real wit; and that thoſe who like it are impoſed upon juſt as men are who take counterfeit coin, becauſe it has the ſame impreſſion with good money; and when we further obſerve, that thoſe very people who uſe falſe wit, as they improve in their taſte and ſenſe deſpiſe the falſe

and

and adopt the true; and that nothing fixes them in a habit of punning and buffoonery, but an incurable ſtupidity, and an inability to act a higher part; we ſhall be obliged to confeſs, that true wit hath its boundaries and marks which for ever diſtinguiſh it.

I ſhall be obliged to ſay ſomething of our ſenſe of perſonal beauty hereafter; I ſhall here content myſelf with making the following obſervation: A perfect beauty always holds the ſuperiority in the eſteem of every one, over remarkable deformity. It is only when the degrees from deformity to beauty approach to each other, or when beauties of different kinds are compared who hold nearly the ſame degree, that we are confuſed and differ in opinion. The ſame confuſion happens in our taſte of ſweet and bitter; if the ſweets approach each other, we cannot readily determine: but

but as beauty is composed by various principles, and is more complicated, we are proportionably in greater confusion in our comparisons when the variations are not very remarkable.

Grandeur of thought, or grandeur of objects, strike us irresistibly with surprize and delight. The Grecian and Roman histories abound with splendid instances of greatness of soul; but I have no need to take you from your favourite poet Homer on this head, whose Iliad is a continued series of elevating sentiments, and of sublime images that force our admiration. Visible objects of grandeur have a similar effect: a large river that throws itself down a precipice with unceasing violence and thunder, never fails to raise a pleasing astonishment in the beholders. A summer's evening sky cast over with lofty and irregular clouds, dipped in purple and gold, the ocean in storms, and a broken

prospect

proſpect of rocks and mountains irregularly piled, affect the mind in the ſame manner.

However certain what I have been juſt ſaying may be; let us ſtop here, and ſuppoſe that I have been entirely miſtaken; let us ſuppoſe that there are ſome men created without thoſe original taſtes, or having the very oppoſite; that there are men who have a natural taſte and approbation of falſhood and ingratitude; who think a mean and ſordid diſpoſition to be meritorious; and who diſeſteem grandeur and generoſity of ſoul: do you not obſerve, that you ſuppoſe them, by their very natures and diſpoſitions, the moſt contemptible, and debaſed animals on earth? Who, ſay you, ſhall judge in this caſe, between ſuch perſons and ourſelves, ſince they have their beauty and their taſte, as well as we; and the difference is, that they judge things to be agreeable,

which

which we judge to be the contrary. But is it not evident, madam, by the very light of ſentiment, that it is not upon the judgment, or opinions, concerning them, that the merit of truth, gratitude, and generoſity depend; but that they have a real value and worth in themſelves, which opinion cannot alter; and that falſehood, in gratitude, and a ſordid, mean temper, have a natural baſeneſs, that opinion cannot ennoble.—I know no reaſon for our perception of abſolute eternal beauty in the virtues I have mentioned, but by ſuppoſing, that the Father of being, who is eternal truth and goodneſs, and the original ſtandard of grandeur and beauty, has ſtamped on our minds a ſenſe of thoſe abſolute and eternal perfections. If opinion were the real ſtandard of ſentiment, the nature of one animal could not be more noble than that of any other; yet it is certain, that if there was in the world but one man of integrity, generoſity, gratitude,

and

The Father of Being hath entrusted

and a great ſoul, and all the reſt of mankind conſiſted of people who had no ſenſe of the dignity of truth, and of a noble diſpoſition, this ſingle perſon would be of more worth, than the whole race of man beſide.

I know the inſtances I have juſt produced of fixed univerſal taſte common to all the ſons of Adam, who are not evidently imperfect and void of underſtanding, are ſufficient to convince you that there is ſuch a thing as univerſal taſte in the mind of man; and they will prove deciſive to every one who has clear conceptions of the nature of conviction and evidence. But as I know by experience, that there are abundance of plauſible and even learned men who ſeldomer conclude from reaſon and evidence than they imagine, and that learning is not a certain antidote againſt the power of prejudice; as I am alſo aware of the favourite ſyſtem that

ſtands

ſtands in need of the opinion I contend againſt, and the great names that ſupport it, I am obliged to enter into a debate of a few pages, that I may leave no objection againſt me unanſwered.

The truth is, in attempting to reſolve your difficulty, I find myſelf caught without poſſibility of retreat, in a diſpute of very old ſtanding, wherein the combatants, although the greateſt philoſophers of their reſpective ages, have generally ſtood aloof, and contented themſelves with eſtabliſhing each his own ſide of the queſtion with ſtrong appearances of truth, without venturing to attack directly the adverſe proofs. The caſe ſtands thus: the croud of thoſe, who have reflected on the ſentiments, men, in all ages, entertain of virtue and vice, of beauty and grandeur of thought, have, from the uniformity they diſcovered in the judgments of mankind on theſe heads, concluded that there is

in

in the human mind, a determined unalterable ſtandard of judgment, or a ſenſe that diſcovers the right and juſt in morality, in beauty, and the ſublime. On the contrary, Hobbes, Locke, Mandeville, and a cloud of moderns, along with ſome ancients, obſerving the different eſtimates of ſome particular moral actions in the different communities of mankind, and the unlimited variety of human fancy in the agreeable works of art and nature, have thence contended, that there is no fixed ſtandard in the mind for taſte, in morality, or beauty.—There is, in the opinions of the learned, as Shakeſpeare ſays of the fortunes of men, a tide that ebbs and flows without ceaſing. At preſent, Mr. Locke's opinion ſeems to bear down all oppoſition; yet ſeveral ſound reaſoners have ventured to call it in queſtion; they find ſomething ſtill in the remarkable uniformity and inflexibility of men's judgments on decent or baſe actions,

on

on the beautiful and the ſublime, that cannot be accounted for but by recurring to a fixed unalterable ſtandard in the mind. To ſpeak in the phraſe of ſome free-thinkers, they perceive by the internal ſenſe, natures and differences that appear as immoveable as fate. The moment they caſt an eye on Homer or Milton, on the ancient ſtatues, and the paintings of Raphael; or the finer paintings of nature, the flowers, the waving corn, and meadows, a varied proſpect, or the ſublime beauties of the night, they find all the objections againſt real beauty baffled, and overwhelmed by intuition. And I fancy the moſt poſitive philoſophers, who derive our approbations from mode or cuſtom, would heſitate a little, if writers were to be judged by their principles; if they were told that Homer and Martial, Milton and Tom Brown, are on the ſame footing in real excellency; and that the beauties of the heroic poets

are not the object of any certain or univerſal taſte in the ſoul, but of a favourable mode of thinking that caſually obtained in the world.

Of all thoſe whom I have to contend with, Mandeville, the author of the Fable of the Bees, makes the cloſeſt attack upon intrinſic beauty, and ſeems to deny, with the greateſt plauſibility, "that there "are things poſſeſſed of ſuch real worth and "excellence, as to be univerſally eſteemed "in all countries and ages." As the ſucceeding writers on his ſide of the queſtion do little more than copy his objections on this head, I will conſider them expreſly, and anſwer at once to the crowd. "When we firſt ſet out in queſt of this intrinſic worth, (ſays he) and find one thing better than another, and a third better than that, and ſo on, we begin to entertain great hopes of ſucceſs; but when we meet with ſeveral things that

are all very good, or all very bad, we are puzzled, and agree not always with ourſelves, much leſs with others. There are different faults as well as beauties, that, as modes and faſhions alter, and men vary in their taſtes and humours, will be differently admired or diſapproved of.

"Judges of painting will never diſagree in opinion, when a fine picture is compared to the daubing of a novice; but how ſtrangely have they differed as to the works of eminent maſters! There are parties amongſt connoiſſeurs, and few of them agree in their eſteem as to ages and countries; and the beſt pictures bear not always the beſt prices. A noted original will be ever worth more than any copy that can be made of it by an unknown hand, though it ſhould be better. The value that is ſet on paintings depends not only on the name of the maſter, and the time of his age he drew them in, but

likewiſe,

likewiſe, in a greater meaſure, on the ſcarcity of his works; and, what is ſtill more unreaſonable, the quality of the perſons in whoſe poſſeſſion they are, as well as the length of time they have been in great families; and if the Cartons, now in Hampton-court, were done by a leſs famous hand than that of Raphael, and had a private perſon for their owner, who would be forced to ſell them, they would never yield the tenth part of the money, which, with all their groſs faults, they are now ſuppoſed to be worth."——

"In the works of nature, worth and excellency are as uncertain; and even in human creatures; what is beautiful in one country, is not ſo in another: how whimſical is the floriſt in his choice! ſometimes the tulip, ſometimes the auricula, and at other times the carnation, ſhall engroſs his eſteem; and every year

a new flower, in his judgment, exceeds all the old ones, though it is much inferior to them both in colour and ſhape. Three hundred years ago, men were ſhaved as cloſely as they are now; ſince that, they have worn beards, and cut them in a vaſt variety of forms, that were all becoming when faſhionable, as now they would be ridiculous. How mean and comically a man looks, that is otherwiſe well dreſſed, in a narrow-brimmed hat, when every body wears broad ones? And again, how monſtrous is a great hat, when the other extreme has been in faſhion for a conſiderable time? Experience has taught us, that theſe modes ſeldom laſt above ten or twelve years; and a man of threeſcore muſt have obſerved five or ſix revolutions of them at leaſt: yet the beginnings of theſe changes, though we have ſeen ſeveral, ſeem always uncouth, and are offenſive afreſh whenever they return. What mortal can decide which

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is the handſomeſt, abſtracted from the mode in being, to wear great buttons or ſmall ones? The many ways of laying out a garden judiciouſly are almoſt innumerable; and what is called beautiful in them, varies according to the taſtes of nations and ages. In graſs-plats, knots, and parterres, a great diverſity of forms is generally agreeable; but a round may be as pleaſing to the eye as a ſquare; an oval cannot be more ſuitable to one place, than it is poſſible for a triangle to be to another: and the pre-eminence an octagon has over an hexagon, is no greater in figures, than at hazard eight has above ſix amongſt the chances." So far Mr. Mandeville. It is eaſily conceived, that the arguments which conclude againſt intrinſic worth and excellency in the objects of taſte, are equally concluſive againſt a fixed determined taſte; and that, if beauty depends on mode or cuſtom, then the taſte is as va-

riable and unſettled as the mode, and has no fixed rules in nature.

All the confuſion this ingenious and ſubtile author has ſhewn within the boundaries of beauty, may be taken away, by diſtinguiſhing between real beauty, that is for ever engaging, and the adjuncts, or habitual aſſociates of beauty, that pleaſes us only accidentally. If we can ſhew this difference in the objects that pleaſe us, the confuſion he has found will clear up. An elderly lady likes the dreſs ſhe wore in her youth, not becauſe it is really more becoming than the preſent faſhion, but becauſe that dreſs bears an intimate relation to her days of joy, and brings them back to her imagination in all the gay colours of that happy ſeaſon of life. In this inſtance you will find the nature of thoſe mutable charms revealed, that depend upon fancy and the mode. Youth is ever beau-

beautiful, and casts a glossy light over all the images of youth, and the dress only pleases by its association. There is, in fact, no arbitrary beauty; and what are called agreeable of this kind, are only the adjuncts or companions that happen accidentally to be joined to real beauty; and by appearing constantly together, to be united to it in idea, and to please merely by the association. The mind places in one connected complex idea, different things that happen to come to it together; memory recollects them together; and a circumstance that has constantly attended on pleasure or pain, will in some degree renew those sensations. The present fashion, when it becomes familiar, becomes also pleasing; that is, it is worn by the young, the gay, and beautiful: the old fashion, in some time after it is left off, becomes disagreeable; that is, it is worn by the morose, who are out of temper with the engaging part of the world;

by the pedantic, the ruſtic, and the old. To be convinced that the diſguſt does not ſpring from the ſingularity, but from a diſagreeable connexion of ideas, let a lovely and elegant nymph or youth ſurpriſe you in a Chineſe or Turkiſh habit, or in a paſtoral dreſs; and you will find, that an engaging perſon is capable of giving charms to a new dreſs, and making the ſimple habit of a ſhepherd or ſhepherdeſs pleaſing. The black hue and thick lips of the inhabitants of Africa, conſidered apart, have no natural beauty; but they are united with the ſmiles, the dalliances, the kind ſentiments, and tender endearing paſſions in the beauties of Africa: they are united in the ſame manner on the imagination of the inhabitants by habit, and return in one amiable picture to the mind. The Blacks who have long converſed with Europeans, have alſo found beauty joined to a fair complexion; conſequently the colour is

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only beautiful by being habitually joined to real beauty. As there are no limits to the adjuncts or circumſtances of real beauty, there is an inexhauſtible variety in arbitrary beauty or faſhion. It is the admiſſion of thoſe caſual adjuncts, amongſt which are comprehended dreſs, ceremonies, and furniture, into the ſame claſs with things permanently agreeable; and the confuſion of them, that have given foundation to objections, and furniſhed examples againſt the abſolute nature of beauty, and univerſal unchangeable taſte. When thoſe adjuncts are ſeen alone, they appear indifferent; and when joined to diſagreeable ideas, they become diſguſtful.

When it is ſaid that good judges have admired blemiſhes in works of art, and that nothing is more inconſiſtent than fancy, they ſay right; but thoſe truths will not bear the concluſions drawn from them: good judges never admired the blemiſhes

blemiſhes ſeparately, but on account of an aſſociation with ſome ſuperior beauty, in which they lay ſo united and blended, that the imagination took all together as they appeared in a ſum, and paſſed a verdict upon the whole in groſs, which if divided, would have been diſtinguiſhed. I have ſeen a mole that has looked very pretty in a fine face, becauſe it was unable to caſt the leaſt dimneſs over the blaze that ſurrounded it, or to make any manner of reſiſtance to the united force of beauty, that altogether ſurpriſed and overpowered the judgment. The admirers of Homer have idolized his faults, not becauſe they were deſtitute of real taſte, but becauſe Homer is upon the whole ſo amazingly fine, and his faults are incorporated with ſuch infinite and ſuperior beauties. If thoſe very blemiſhes were in works that had no excellencies, or but a few of a low ſtile, then they would not impoſe thus on the judgments of men.

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The ſame train of reaſoning will help to end the old and great diſpute, about the ſtability of moral virtue, and a moral ſenſe. When it is alleged, that actions called immoral in ſome nations are approved of, and even make a part of religious worſhip in another; it may be anſwered, that no nation ever approved of the crimes that are generally reckoned ſo, for their own ſakes, and taken alone, but on account of an aſſociation with ſomething of tranſcendent worth and excellency. Immoralities have mixed with religion, and were revered on account of the union. Human ſacrifices were offered at Carthage, the rites of Venus admitted laſciviouſneſs, of Bacchus, drunkenneſs; and idiots, however vicious, are accounted Saints by Mahometans: but all hiſtory teſtifies that murder, proſtitution, and drunkenneſs, taken alone, were vices amongſt the heathens, and are looked upon as crimes by the Turks; that they bore

bore the ſame invariable characters amongſt them as with us; and that even the ſanction of religion did not alter the landmarks of nature. If you deſire to ſee what kept guilty deeds in repute in the heathen worſhip, you muſt take into view the ſublime majeſty and reverence of religion, with which they were incorporated.

Sentiments of Mankind with regard to Virtue and Beauty are ſteadfaſt & uniform.

From what I have ſaid it appears, that the arguments alleged do not prove againſt the unalterable ſenſe of virtue and beauty; ſince where you ſeparate ideas that have been caſually aſſociated, the judgments of men, of Beauty and Virtue, are ſtedfaſt and uniform throughout all nations and ages. In our taſte of compounds there is an effect like what I have been treating of; if you add a few drops of honey to a large quantity of the juice of wormwood, the whole ſhall be bitter; if, on the contrary, you mingle a few drops

drops of the juice of wormwood in a veſſel full of honey, the whole ſhall be ſweet; yet are neither the honey nor the wormwood changed, and our taſte of ſweet and bitter is the ſame.

In the quotation I made from Mandeville, there are ſome other objections that require an anſwer. People may be doubtful and aſtray in the theory of beauty, who have the moſt exact intelligence of it in their ſenſations, by miſtaking the point of beauty. A flower-garden attracts our view by the ſplendor and bright confuſion of its colours; and we look at it with pleaſure, altho' we take no notice of the figure of the parterre; that is, we diſcover beauty, without attending to the form and diviſion of the garden. Floriſts then diſagree about the choice of form in the flower-knots, becauſe the beauty of the object of their admiration does not conſiſt in that form. Flowers, in every arrange-

rangement of the ground, or diſperſed irregularly by the wild hand of nature, are pleaſing to the eye, like a fine woman, who charms, whether ſhe reclines on a ſopha, or walks in the garden. There is hardly room for preference between any regular forms of the parterre, beſides fancy and aptitude to the place. The theoriſt then who contends, that there is no pre-determined taſte of beauty in the paſſion of floriſts, becauſe they differ in the form of flower-gardens, is deceived, becauſe he has miſtaken the point of beauty, which conſiſts not in the form of the ground, but in the flowers themſelves.

There is a ſuppoſition that runs thro' Mandeville, and ſeveral other writers on this ſubject, who undoubtedly copy one from the other, that beauty is of one kind, and differs only in degree; and therefore, that if there be ſuch a thing as real beauty in objects, we can compare

pare it, and always diſcover the moſt excellent; as men are able, by meaſuring, to determine the longeſt cane, or the higheſt ſteeple; thence they proceed to conclude, from the confuſion of men, and from the variety of their choice and judgment, that there is no real beauty; whereas in fact, beauty is an exceeding general term, that comprehends very diſtant and various kinds that have no common meaſure, and conſequently cannot be compared. Pictures and ſtatues are like the originals in ſuch various claſſes, that their excellencies cannot be meaſured with each other. It is as abſurd, perhaps, to compare a good landſkip to a good portrait, as to compare a fine proſpect with a handſome man. Neither can the reciprocal proportion of beauty be determined between different characters, even within the ſame ſpecies. It is probably impoſſible to aſcertain any rules of judgment, by which,

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the ſuperiority may be determined, between the Apollo of Belvidere and the Venus of Medici: yet this is no argument that their beauties are not real and clearly known; it only proves, that they are of different kinds. From what I have ſaid, we may eaſily conceive the reaſon of the difficulty of determining the ſuperiority between Homer and Virgil, as poets. If their principal excellencies lay in one kind; if Virgil's chief merit conſiſted in the grandeur of his thoughts, or Homer's in majeſty and a chaſte ſweetneſs, the point of preference between them might be decided: but while their diſtinguiſhing beauties vary in kind, the contention of ſuperiority is endleſs. Yet can any one thence conclude, that they want real merit? or that men want a natural taſte for their charms? When pleaſing objects lie in different departments of beauty, and cannot be compared, then pre-engagement,

gagement, the praiſes of others whoſe judgments we value, novelty, or the ſcarcity of one kind, turn the ſcale, and form the preference. You may prefer the mild fragrancy and glow of a roſe, another may rather admire the gorgeous array of a tulip, yet neither has ſtrayed from the province of beauty.

The ſmall value put upon ſome flowers, is not a proof that they are not eſteemed, but that they are common. The roſe and honeyſuckle are neglected and left in the hedges, not becauſe they want beauty, but becauſe they are every where preſented to our eyes, and may be had without pains or price. We value them, and paſs them by without curioſity, as we do the wild concert we hear in the woods and copſes. It is a miſtake to think men value things in proportion as they pay for them. Good air, ſleep, day-light, or the liberty

of going where we pleaſe, are known by every one to be bleſſings of the firſt rate; yet no one buys them who is at liberty to enjoy them, although people pay dearly for things they do not value half ſo much.

You readily conceive, that taſte in common diſcourſe, is applied to the habitual prepoſſeſſions of a nation, particularly of the people of faſhion, in which ſenſe it comprehends both the univerſal attachments which are common to the ſpecies, and the caſual likings and averſions in matters naturally indifferent, ſuch as the modes of dreſs and furniture, which by an accidental aſſociation are become objects of preference and diſguſt. In this vulgar ſenſe, taſte is no more than the image of the times upon the mind, which varies in nations and ages, or amongſt particular perſons,

perſons, and may be called *mixed taſte*. When you entwine the parts of mixed taſte, when you reject all that is caſual, and peculiar to this or that country or age as ſpurious, and have taken the univerſal charms that affect the ſavage and courtier, the ruſtic and philoſopher, the Indian and European, this laſt is real beauty, the object of the taſte I treat of. And happy it is for the fame of poets, philoſophers, and patriots, that there is ſuch a ſenſe in the human mind, by which their eternal palms flouriſh, and muſt bloom afreſh through all ages, as long as mankind remain in being.

You are to obſerve, that I do not call taſte a ſpecies of judgment, although it is actually that part of judgment, whoſe objects are the ſublime, the beautiful, and affecting; becauſe this kind of judgment is not the iſſue of reaſon and compariſon, like a mathematical infer-

ence, but is perceived inſtantaneouſly, and obtruded upon the mind, like ſweet and bitter upon the ſenſe, from which analogy it has borrowed the name of *taſte*. There have been criticks ſo trifling, as to enquire whether the word *taſte*, which is plainly metaphorical, was in uſe in the learned languages. A man bleſſed with plain common ſenſe would undoubtedly conceive that the thing meant by it was known, ever ſince beauty and grandeur of thought were obſerved in the world, and admired. We may to as much purpoſe enquire whether the ancients had diſtinct names for the tenderneſs of a parent, or the flavour of Chian wine; and if we find no ſuch words upon record, conclude that the ancients did not love their children, or diſtinguiſh their wines.

Good taſte is the inward light or intelligence of univerſal beauty. In Greece, where

where it firſt ſhone, poetry, architecture, painting, ſculpture, and muſic, ſprung up together, the beautiful children of one birth. At the ſame time the men were remarkable for elevated ſentiments, and the women for that elegance which gives the laſt luſtre to beauty. The ſame revolution happened in Rome; and now again the ſciences revive in concert in Europe, and elegance awakes with the arts. In the ages of ignorance they all languiſhed, and fell together. The heavy, confuſed, and groſs ornaments of the old Gothick buildings, placed without elegance or proportion (ſays Rollin) were the images of the writings of the ſame age.

From the joint appearance and receſs of the engaging arts, it is obvious that they are related and depend upon the ſame principle; accordingly you find a ſtriking conformity in the moſt diſtant productions

tions of genius. Muſic inſpires us like a glowing deſcription; the ſtatue and picture breathe the fire and paſſion of poetry; and you will diſcover the ſame ſtile and image of grandeur in Corregio, that you ſee in Homer.

True taſte diſcovers with delight the image of nature, and purſues it with a faithful paſſion. The graceful and the becoming are never found ſeparated from nature and propriety. When we came to this obſervation in Rollin, you made an objection, that obliged me, in order to anſwer it, to make ſome reflections, which led me nearer the origin of elegance than I expected. Your objection, madam, was this: "If elegance be inſeparable from propriety and nature, why are not the common people, who are without education, juſt as nature made them, the moſt graceful? and why does elegance reſide only amongſt thoſe who

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are formed by art?" I could not paſs over this ingenious queſtion without an anſwer, and it led me to the following obſervations.

It is not from men in want, whether real or imaginary, we are to ſeek for the natural biaſs of the ſoul. The neceſſaries and comforts of life are procured by vaſt labour and hardſhips, which fall to the lot of the common herd of mankind in all countries; and labour requires harſh, forced, and violent motions, which therefore become habitual to the crowd. As this race of men walk not for pleaſure, but to perform journeys, or to remove where their occaſions call them, they take the advantage of bending the body forward, and of aiding the motion by a ſling with their arms as they walk. Their low ſtation, their wants and employments, give them a ſordidneſs and ungeneroſity of diſpoſition, together with a

Good Reason assign'd why the ower Part of Mankind are in general destitute of Elegance and Grace

coarseneſs and nakedneſs of expreſſion; from whence it happens, that their motions and addreſs are equally rude and ungraceful. And yet by conſidering the matter cloſely you may diſcover, that this unſeemly and diſhonoured ſtate of man is accidental, and is in truth the offspring of his wants, and of the miſeries that yoak him down a ſlave to the glebe he tills, and depreſs together his mind and body. But obſerve the few in a higher ſtation, who by their fortunes are diſengaged from wretchedneſs and poverty, who vegetate freely, and take the biaſs of the unfettered human genius. You ſee their taſte ſoon diſtinguiſh them from the crowd, they aſſume a more elevated character, they ſeem to be inſpired by a nobler ſoul, a more generous vein diſcovers itſelf in their boſoms, elegance and lofty decency make their appearance in the human ſtate, and an illuſtrious nature appears to view, which was nevertheleſs real while it lay buried

buried and oppreſſed under wretchedneſs.

Abject meanneſs and rudeneſs then are the iſſue of hardſhip and want, but not of the human diſpoſition or frame of mind; on the contrary, the moment man is releaſed from the violence and miſery that oppreſs him, that his real nature takes the lead, and his taſte aſſumes its honeſt rights; it covers him with decent elegance; it beſtows on him a dignity worthy of the ſovereign of earth, air, and water; it wraps him in the golden viſions of poetry and muſic, and charms him with the new ideas of beauty and grandeur. Theſe are the natural paſſions that lay hid, and now break forth to view, when the preſſure is taken off that bent down the ſlave, and chained his attentions to the earth. The appetite of beauty lies always in the mind ready to direct us to finer proſpects. Conceive a youthful

youthful monarch, long aſtray upon a barren heath, amongſt miſerable villagers, his infant years almoſt forgotten, and his thoughts wholly taken up by his preſent unfortunate circumſtances. He is at length diſcovered, and reſtored to his court, to grandeur, and pleaſure, which he recollects with ſecret joy. Taſte finds us in this manner forlorn outcaſts, ſhe ſtrips us of our rudeneſs, and leads us to ſcenes and proſpects where all is beautiful, and all is familiar. You may eaſily ſee the reaſon why the inhabitants of barren countries and of the northern part of Europe and Aſia muſt fall into rudeneſs, and men who ſpend their whole time in hunting and procuring the neceſſaries of life become ſavages; a ſenſe of beauty is not loſt in them, they only want leiſure and quiet to attend to it.

Here then is the key to your difficulty. Elevation of thought, and the ſenſe of *beauty*, are natural to the ſoul; but ſoon

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after the infant comes into the world, long before the mind is matured, or its attentions meet its favourite objects, cold, heat, hunger, ſickneſs, and the various diſtreſſes to which we are ſubjected, prevent our ſentiments, and model our views into a ſordid mundane ſcheme of intereſt, of riches, and power; and teach us to ſet a mighty value on the conveniencies that redreſs our wants. Beauty, and grandeur of ſentiment, however illuſtrious, are not ſo preſſing as neceſſity; they are the diſcoveries of a tranquil mind, and muſt lye behind the curtain, while want and labour iſſue forth upon the ſtage, and engage the attention. Labour and want are the ſame thing to the human mind, that froſt and a chilling air are to a tender tree or flowering ſhrub, tranſplanted to a northern climate; they blaſt it, and forbid its native flowers and verdure to appear, and they preſent it to the eye in barrenneſs and winter nakedneſs,

neſs. Uncomely barbarity, and a ſordid diſpoſition, are the unworthy offspring of our miſeries and ſufferings; every day impreſſes them deeper upon the mind, in which diſhonoured ſtate the race of man muſt have continued, until from art and induſtry aroſe plenty and eaſe. Thus in proportion as our ſpecies emerge out of want, they meet and embrace the familar ideas of dignity and beauty, and get ſhort interrupted views of the ſources of the fine arts, as men converſe with well-known acquaintances in their ſleep, whom they never knew in real life: then the froſt begins to diſſolve, the barren orange ſhrub is removed to a more ſouthern ſoil, where it puts forth unknown bloſſoms, and bears in pride its golden fruit.

However I muſt obſerve, that in ſavage rudeneſs and barbarity, taſte lies very near the reflections of men; and, as I ſaid, the reaſon they miſs of it is, becauſe

cauſe they are employed on objects of greater importance; but in polite nations, taſte is often more irretrievable, becauſe, when a mixed taſte has got poſſeſſion of the mind, the natural ſenſe of beauty is deceived, and ſeeks for no other object.

Chap. II.

Having anſwered the objections uſually brought againſt a permanent ſenſe of beauty, let us now proceed to ſingle out the particular ſpecies or kinds of beauty; and begin with elegance of perſon, that ſo wonderfully elevates ths human character.

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Elegance, the moſt undoubted offſpring and viſible image of fine taſte, the moment it appears, is univerſally admired: men diſagree about the other conſtituent parts of beauty, but they all unite without heſitation to acknowledge the power of elegance,

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The general opinion is, that this moſt conſpicuous part of beauty, that is perceived and acknowledged by every body, is yet utterly inexplicable, and retires from our ſearch when we would diſcover what it is. Where ſhall I find the ſecret retreat of the graces, to explain to me the elegance they dictate, and to paint in viſible colours the fugitive and varying enchantment that hovers round a graceful perſon, yet leaves us for ever in agreeable ſuſpence and confuſion? I need not ſeek for them, madam; the graces are but emblems of the human mind, in its loveliest appearances; and while I write for you, it is impoſſible not to feel their influence.

Perſonal Elegance, for that is the object of our preſent enquiry, may be defined the image and reflection of the grandeur and beauty of the inviſible ſoul. Grandeur and beauty in the ſoul itſelf, are

are not objects of ſenſe; colours cannot paint them, but they are united to ſentiments that appear viſible; they beſtow a noble meaning and importance of attitude, and diffuſe inexpreſſible lovelineſs over the perſon.

When two or more paſſions or ſentiments unite, they are not ſo readily diſtinguiſhed, as if they had appeared ſeparate; however, it is eaſy to obſerve, that the complacency and admiration we feel in the preſence of elegant perſons, is made up of reſpect and affection; and that we are diſappointed when we ſee ſuch perſons act a baſe or indecent part. Theſe ſymptoms plainly ſhew, that perſonal elegance appears to us to be the image and reflection of an elevated and beautiful mind. In ſome characters, the grandeur of ſoul is predominant; in whom beauty is majeſtic and awful. In this ſtile is Miſs F——. In other charac-

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ters, a ſoft and attracting grace is more conſpicuous: this latter kind is more pleaſing, for an obvious reaſon. But elegance cannot exiſt in either alone, without a mixture of the other; for majeſty without the beautiful, would be haughty and diſguſting; and eaſy acceſſible beauty would loſe the idea of elegance, and become an object of contempt.

The grandeur and beauty of the ſoul charm us univerſally, who have all of us implanted in our boſoms, even in the midſt of miſery, paſſions of high deſcent, immenſe ambition, and romantick hopes. You may conceive an impriſoned bird, whoſe wild notes, prompted by the approach of ſpring, give her a confuſed notion of joy, although ſhe has no diſtinct idea of airy flights and ſummer groves; ſo when man emerging from wretchedneſs aſſumes a nobler character, and the elevation of the human genius appears openly, we view with ſecret joy,

and

and delightful amazement, the ſure evidence and pledge of our dignity: the mind catches fire by a train that lies within itſelf, and expands with conſcious pride and merit, like a generous youth over the images of his country's heroes. Of the ſoftened and engaging part of elegance, I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak at large hereafter.

Perſonal elegance or grace is a fugitive luſtre, that never ſettles in any part of the body; you ſee it glance and diſappear in the features and motions of a graceful perſon; it ſtrikes your view; it ſhines like an exhalation: but the moment you follow it, the wandering flame vaniſhes, and immediately lights up in ſomething elſe: you may as well think of fixing the pleaſing deluſion of your dreams, or the colours of a diſſolving rainbow.

You have ariſen early at times, in the ſummer ſeaſon, to take the advantage of the cool of the morning, to ride abroad. Let us ſuppoſe you have miſtaken an hour or two, and juſt got out a few minutes before the riſing of the ſun. You ſee the fields and woods, that lay the night before in obſcurity, attiring themſelves in beauty and verdure; you ſee a profuſion of brilliants ſhining in the dew: you ſee the ſtream gradually admitting the light into its pure boſom; and you hear the birds, who are awakened by a rapture, that comes upon them from the morning. If the eaſtern ſky be clear, you ſee it glow with the promiſe of a flame that has not yet appeared; and if it be overcaſt with clouds, you ſee thoſe clouds ſtained by a bright red, bordered with gold or ſilver, that by the changes appear volatile, and ready to vaniſh. How various and beautiful are thoſe appearances, which are not the ſun, but the diſtant effects of it over dif-

different objects! In like manner the ſoul flings inexpreſſible charms over the human perſon and actions; but then the cauſe is leſs known, becauſe the ſoul for ever ſhines behind a cloud, and is always retired from our ſenſes,

You conceive why elegance is of a fugitive nature, and exiſts chiefly in motion: as it is communicated by the principle of action that governs the whole perſon, it is found over the whole body, and is fixed no-where. The curious eye with eagerneſs purſues the wandering beauty, which it ſees with ſurprize at every turn, but is never able to overtake. It is a waving flame, that, like the reflection of the ſun from water, never ſettles; it glances on you in every motion and diſpoſition of the body; its different powers through attitude and motion ſeem to be collected in dancing, wherein it

plays over the arms, the legs, the breaſt, the neck, and in ſhort the whole frame: but if grace has any fixed throne, it is in the face, the reſidence of the ſoul, where you think a thouſand times it is juſt iſſuing into view.

Elegance aſſumes to itſelf an empire equal to that of the ſoul; it rules and inſpires every part of the body, and makes uſe of all the human powers; but it particularly takes the paſſions under its charge and direction, and turns them into a kind of artillery, with which it does infinite execution.

The paſſions that are favourites with the graces are modeſty, good-nature, particularly when it is heightened by a ſmall colouring of affection into *ſweetneſs*, and that fine languor which ſeems to be formed of a mixture of ſtill joy and hope. Surprize,

prize, ſhame, and even grief and anger, have appeared pleaſing under proper reſtrictions; for it muſt be obſerved, that all exceſs is ſhocking and diſagreeable, and that even the moſt pleaſing paſſions appear to moſt advantage when the tincture they caſt over the countenance is enfeebled and gentle. The paſſions that are enemies to the graces are impudence, affectation, ſtrong and harſh degrees of pride, malice, and auſterity.

There is an union of the fine paſſions, but ſo delicate that you cannot conceive any one of them ſeparate from the reſt, called *ſenſibility*, which is requiſite in an elegant deportment; it chiefly reſides in the eye, which is indeed the ſeat of the paſſions.

I have ſpoken of the paſſions only as they are ſubſervient to grace, which is the object of our preſent attention. The

face is the mother-country, if I may call it ſo, or the habitation of grace; and it viſits the other parts of the body only as diſtant provinces, with ſome little partiality to the neck, and the fine baſis that ſupports it; but the countenance is the very palace in which it takes up its reſidence; it is there it revels through its various apartments; you ſee it wrapped in clouded majeſty upon the brow; you diſcover it about the lips hardly riſing to a ſmile, and vaniſhing in a moment, when it is rather perceived than ſeen; and then, by the moſt engaging viciſſitudes, it enlivens, flames, and diſſolves in the eye.

You have, I ſuppoſe, all along obſerved, that I am not treating of beauty, which depends on different principles, but of that elegance which is the effect of a delicate and awakened taſte, and in every kind of form is the enchantment that attracts and pleaſes univerſally, even without

without the aſſiſtance of any other charm; whereas without it no degree of beauty is charming. You have undoubtedly ſeen women lovely without much beauty, and handſome without being lovely; it is gracefulneſs cauſes this variation, and throws a luſtre over diſagreeable features, as the ſun paints a ſhowery cloud with the colours of the rainbow.

I before remarked, that the grace of every elegant perſon is varied agreeable to the character and diſpoſition of the perſon it beautifies; I am ſenſible you readily conceive the reaſon. Elegance is the natural habit and image of the ſoul beaming forth in action; it muſt therefore be expreſſed by the peculiar features, air, and diſpoſition of the perſon; it muſt ariſe from nature, and flow with eaſe and a propriety that diſtinguiſhes it. The imitation of any particular perſon, how-

ever graceful, is dangerous, leſt the affectation appear; but the unſtudied elegance of nature is acquired by the example and converſation of ſeveral elegant perſons of different characters, which people adopt to the import of their own geſtures, without knowing how.

It is alſo becauſe elegance is the reflection of the ſoul appearing in action, that good ſtatues, and pictures drawn from life, are laid before the eye in motion. If you look at the old Gothic churches built in barbarous ages, you will ſee the ſtatues reared up dead and inanimate againſt the walls.

I ſaid, at the beginning of this little diſcourſe, that the beauty of dreſs reſults from mode or faſhion, and it certainly does ſo in a great meaſure; but I muſt limit that aſſertion by the following obſervation, that there is alſo a real beauty in

in attire that does not depend on the mode: thoſe robes which leave the whole perſon at liberty in its motions, and that give to the imagination the natural proportions and ſymmetry of the body, are always more becoming than ſuch as reſtrain any part of the body, or in which it is loſt or disfigured. You may eaſily imagine how a pair of ſtays laced tightly about the Minerva we admired, would oppreſs the ſublime beauty of her comportment and figure. Since perſons of rank cannot chuſe their own dreſs, but muſt run along with the preſent faſhion, the ſecret of dreſſing gracefully muſt conſiſt in the ſlender variations that cannot be obſerved to deſert the faſhion, and yet approach nigher to the complexion and import of the countenance, and that at the ſame time allows to the whole body the greateſt poſſible freedom, eaſe, and imagery: by imagery I mean, that as a good painter will ſhew the effect of the muſcles

muſcles that do not appear to the eye, ſo a perſon ſkilful in dreſs will diſplay the elegance of the form, though it be covered and out of view. As the taſte of dreſs approaches to perfection all art diſappears, and it ſeems the effect of negligence and inſtinctive inattention: for this reaſon its beauties ariſe from the manner and general air rather than from the richneſs, which laſt, when it becomes too groſs and oppreſſive, deſtroys the elegance. A brilliancy and parade in dreſs is therefore the infallible ſign of a bad taſte, that in this contraband manner endeavours to make amends for the want of true elegance, and bears a relation to the heaps of ornament that encumbered the Gothic buildings. Apelles obſerving an Helen painted by one of his ſcholars, that was overcharged with a rich dreſs, "I find, young man, ſaid he, not being able to paint her beautiful, you have made her fine."

Harſh

Harſh and violent motions are always unbecoming. Milton attributes the ſame kind of motion to his angels that the Heathens did to their deities, *ſoft ſliding without ſtep*. It is impoſſible to preſerve the attractions in a country-dance that attend on a minuet; as the ſtep quickens, the moſt delicate of the graces retire. The rule holds univerſally through all action, whether quick or ſlow; it ſhould always partake of the ſame poliſhed and ſoftened motion, particularly in the tranſitions of the countenance, where the genius of the perſon ſeems to hover and reſide.

The degrees run very high upon the ſcale of elegance, and probably few have arrived near the higheſt pitch; but it is certain, that the idea of ſurpriſing beauty that was familiar in Greece, has been hardly conceived by the moderns: many of their ſtatues remain the objects of our ad-

admiration, but wholly ſuperior to imitation; their pictures that have ſunk in the wreck of time, appear in the deſcriptions made of them to have equal imagination with the ſtatues; and their poetry abounds with the ſame cœleſtial imagery. But what puts this matter out of doubt is, that their celebrated beauties were the models of their artiſts, and it is known, that the elegancies of Thaïs and Phryne were copied by the famous painters of Greece, and conſigned to canvaſs and marble to aſtoniſh and charm diſtant ages.

Perſonal elegance, in which taſte aſſumes the moſt conſpicuous and noble appearance, confuſes us in our enquires after it, by the quickneſs and variety of its changes, as well as by a complication that is not eaſily unravelled. I defined it to be the image and reflection of a great and beautiful ſoul; let us ſepa-

rate

rate the diſtinct parts of this variety; when they appear aſunder, you will find them perfectly familiar and intelligible.

The firſt, and moſt reſpectable part that enters into the compoſition of elegance, is the lofty conſciouſneſs of worth or virtue, which ſuſtains an habitual decency, and becoming pride.

The ſecond and moſt pleaſing part, is a diſplay of good-nature approaching to affection, of gentle affability, and, in general, of the pleaſing paſſions. It ſeems difficult to reconcile theſe two parts, and in fact it is ſo; but when they unite, then they appear like a reſerved and virgin kindneſs, that is at once noble and ſoft, that may be won, but muſt be courted with delicacy.

The third part of elegance is the appearance of a poliſhed and tranquil habit

habit of mind, that ſoftens the actions and emotions, and gives a covert proſpect of innocence and undiſturbed repoſe. I will treat of theſe ſeparate, and firſt of dignity of ſoul.

I obſerved, near the beginning of this Diſcourſe, in anſwer to an objection you made, that the mind has always a taſte for truth, for gratitude, for generoſity, and greatneſs of ſoul: theſe which are peculiarly called *ſentiments*, ſtamp upon the human ſpirit a dignity and worth not to be found in any other animated being. However great and ſurpriſing the moſt glorious objects in nature be, the heaving ocean, the moon that guides it and caſts a ſoftened luſtre over the night, the ſtarry firmament, or the ſun itſelf; yet their beauty and grandeur inſtantly appear of an inferior kind, beyond all compariſon, to this of the ſoul of man. Theſe ſentiments are united under the

general

general name of virtue; and such are the embellishments they diffuse over the mind, that Plato, a very polite philosopher, says finely, "If Virtue was to appear in a visible shape, all men would be enamoured of her."

Virtue and truth are inseparable, and take their flight together. A mind devoid of truth is a frightful wreck; it is like a great city in ruins, whose mouldring towers just bring to the imagination the mirth and life that once were there, and is now no more. Truth is the genius of taste, and enters into the essence of simple beauty in wit, in writing, and throughout the fine arts.

Generosity covers almost all other defects, and raises a blaze around them in which they disappear and are lost: like sovereign beauty, it makes a short cut to our affections; it wins our hearts without

without reſiſtance or delay, and unites all the world to favour and ſupport its deſigns.

Grandeur of ſoul, fortitude, and a reſolution that haughtily ſtruggles with deſpair, and will neither yield to, nor make terms with, misfortunes; which through every ſituation, repoſes a noble confidence in itſelf, and has an immoveable view to future glory and honour, aſtoniſhes the world with admiration and delight. We, as it were, lean forward with ſurprize and trembling joy to behold the human ſoul collecting its ſtrength, and aſſerting a right to ſuperior fates. When you leave man out of your account, and view the whole viſible creation beſide, you indeed ſee ſeveral traces of grandeur and unſpeakable power, and the intermixture of a rich ſcenery of beauty; yet ſtill the whole appears to be but a ſolemn abſurdity, and

and to have a littleneſs and inſignificancy. But when you reſtore man to proſpect, and put him at the head of it, endued with genius and an immortal ſoul; when you give him a paſſion for truth, boundleſs views that ſpread along through eternity, and a fortitude that ſtruggles with fate, and yields not to misfortunes, then the ſkies, the ocean, and the earth, take the ſtamp of worth and dignity from the noble inhabitant whoſe purpoſes they ſerve.

A mind fraught with the virtues is the natural ſoil of elegance. Unaffected truth, generoſity and grandeur of ſoul, for ever pleaſe and charm: even when they break from the common forms, and appear wild and unmethodized by education, they are ſtill beautiful. On the contrary, as ſoon as we diſcover that outward elegance which is formed by the mode, to

No true Elegance, unleſs accom
y real Greatneſs of Soul.—

want truth, generoſity, or grandeur of ſoul, it inſtantly ſinks in our eſteem like counterfeit coin, and we are ſenſible of a reluctant diſappointment like that of the lover in the epigram, who became enamoured with the lady's voice and the ſoftneſs of her hand in the dark, but was cured of his paſſion as ſoon as he had light to view her.

Let us now paſs on to the moſt pleaſing part of elegance, an habitual diſplay of the kind and gentle paſſions.

We are naturally inclined to love politeneſs. thoſe who bear an affection to us; and we are charmed with the homage that is paid to our merit: by theſe weakneſſes politeneſs attacks us. The well-bred gentleman always in his behaviour inſinuates a regard to others, tempered with reſpect. His attention to pleaſe

confeſſes

confeſſes plainly his kindneſs to you, and the high eſteem he holds you in. The aſſiduous prevention of our wiſhes, and that yielding ſweetneſs, complaiſance puts on for our ſake, are irreſiſtible; and although we know this kind of flattery to be proſtitute and habitual, yet it is not indifferent to us; we receive it in a manner that ſhews how much it gratifies us: — because we are fond even the appearance of Virtues. . . .

The deſire of being agreeable, finds out the art of being ſo without ſtudy or labour. Ruſtics who fall in love, grow unuſually polite and engaging. This new charm, that has altered their natures, and ſuddenly endued them with the powers of pleaſing, is nothing more than an enlivened attention to pleaſe, that has taken poſſeſſion of their minds, and tinctured their actions. We ought not to wonder that love is thus enchanting: its

tender aſſiduity is but the natural addreſs of the paſſion; politeneſs borrows the flattering form of affection, and becomes agreeable by the appearance of kindneſs.

What pleaſes us generally appears beautiful. Complaiſance, that is ſo engaging, gives an agreeableneſs to the whole perſon, and creates a beauty that nature gave not to the features; it ſubmits, it promiſes, it applauds in the countenance; the heart lays itſelf in ſmiles at your feet, and a voice that is indulgent and tender, is always heard with pleaſure.

The laſt conſtituent part of elegance is the picture of a tranquil ſoul that appears in ſoftening the actions and emotions, and exhibits a retired proſpect of happineſs and innocence.

A calm

A calm of mind that is ſeen in graceful eaſy action, and in the enfeeblement of our paſſions, gives us an idea of the golden age, when human nature, adorned with innocence, and the peace that attends it, repoſed in the arms of content. This ſerene proſpect of human nature always pleaſes us; and although the content, whoſe image it is, be viſionary in this world, and we cannot arrive at it, yet it is the point in imagination we have finally in view, in all the purſuits of life, and the native home for which we do not ceaſe to languiſh.

The ſentiment of tranquillity particularly beautifies paſtoral poetry. The images of calm and happy quiet that appear in ſhaded groves, in ſilent vales, and ſlumbers by falling ſtreams, invite the poet to indulge his genius in rural ſcenes. The muſic that lulls and compoſes the mind, at the ſame time enchants it. The

hue of this beauteous eaſe, caſt over the human actions and emotions, forms a very delightful part of elegance, and gives the other conſtituent parts an appearance of nature and truth: for in a tranquil ſtate of mind, undiſturbed by wants or fears, the views of men are generous and elevated. From the combination of theſe fine parts, grandeur of ſoul, complacency, and eaſe, ariſe the enchantments of elegance; but the appearance of the two laſt are oftener found together, and then they form Politeneſs.

When we take a view of the ſeparate parts that conſtitute perſonal elegance, we immediately know the ſeeds that are proper to be cheriſhed in the infant mind, to bring forth the beauteous production. The virtues ſhould be cultivated early with ſacred care. Good-nature, modeſty, affability, and a kind concern for others, ſhould

ſhould be carefully inculcated; and an eaſy unconſtrained dominion acquired by habit over the paſſions. A mind thus finely prepared, is capable of the higheſt luſtre of elegance; which is afterwards attained with as little labour as our firſt language, by only aſſociating with graceful people of different characters, from whom an habitual gracefulneſs will be acquired, that will bear the natural unaffected ſtamp of our own minds; in ſhort, it will be our own character and genius ſtripped of its native rudeneſs, and enriched with beauty and attraction.

Nature, that beſtows her favours without reſpect of perſons, often denies to the great the capacity of diſtinguiſhed elegance, and flings it away in obſcure villages. You ſometimes ſee it at a country fair ſpread an amiableneſs over a ſun-burnt girl, like the light of the moon through a miſt; but ſuch, madam, is the

neceſſity of habitual elegance acquired by education and converſe, that if even you were born in that low claſs, you could be no more than the faireſt damſel at the may-pole, and the object of the hope and jealouſy of a few ruſtics.

People are rendered totally incapable of elegance by the want of good-nature, and the other gentle paſſions; by the want of modeſty and ſenſibility; and by a want of that noble pride which ariſes from a conſciouſneſs of lofty and generous ſentiments. The abſence of theſe native charms is generally ſupplied by a briſk ſtupidity, an impudence unconſcious of defect, a caſt of malice, and an uncommon tendency to ridicule; as if nature had given theſe her ſtep-children an inſtinctive intelligence, that they can riſe out of contempt only by the depreſſion of others. For the ſame reaſon it is, that perſons of true and finiſhed taſte

rſons of true & finiſhed Taſ
dom affect Ridicule.

taſte ſeldom affect ridicule, becauſe they are conſcious of their own ſuperior merit. Pride is the cauſe of ridicule in the one, as it is of candour in the other; but the effects differ, as the ſtudied parade of poverty does from the negligent grandeur of riches. You will ſee nothing more common in the world than for people, who by ſtupidity and inſenſibility are incapable of the graces, commence wits on the ſtrength of the *petite* talents of mimickry, and the briſk tartneſs that ill-nature never fails to ſupply.

From what I have ſaid it appears, that a ſenſe of elegance is a ſenſe of diginity, of virtue, and innocence united. Is it not natural then to expect, that in the courſe of a liberal education, men ſhould cultivate the generous qualities they approve and aſſume? But inſtead of them, men only aim at the appearances, which require no ſelf-denial; and thus, without

out acquiring the virtues, they ſacrifice their honeſty and ſincerity: whence it come to paſs, that there is often the leaſt virtue where there is the greateſt appearance of it; and that the poliſhed part of mankind only arrive at the ſubtile corruption, of uniting vice with the dreſs and complexion of virtue.

I have dwelt on perſonal elegance, becauſe the ideas and principles in this part of good taſte are more familiar to you. We may then take them for a foundation, in our future obſervations, ſince the ſame principles of eaſy grace and ſimple grandeur, will animate our ideas with an unſtudied propriety, and enlighten our judgments in beauty, in literature, in ſculpture, painting, and the other departments of fine taſte.

I ſhall but ſlightly touch on our taſte of perſonal beauty, becauſe it requires no directions

directions to be known. To aſk what is beauty, ſays a philoſopher, is the queſtion of a blind man. I ſhall therefore only make a few reflections on this head, that lie out of the common track. But prior to what I have to ſay, it is neceſſary to make ſome obſervations on phyſiognomy.

chap. III. Perſonal Beauty

There is an obvious relation between the mind and the turn of the features, ſo well known by inſtinct, that every one is more or leſs expert at reading the countenance. We look as well ſpeak our minds; and amongſt people of little experience, the look is generally moſt ſincere. This is ſo well underſtood, that it is become a part of education to learn to diſguiſe the countenance, which yet requires a habit from early youth, and the continual practice of hypocriſy, to deceive an intelligent eye. The natural virtues and vices not only have their places in the aſpect, even acquired habits that much affect

affect the mind ſettle there; contemplation, in length of time, gives a caſt of thought to the countenance.

Now to come back to our ſubject: the aſſemblage called beauty, is the image of noble ſentiments and amiable paſſions in the face; but ſo blended and confuſed that we are not able to ſeparate and diſtinguiſh them. The mind has a ſenſibility, and clear knowledge, in many inſtances without reflection, or even the power of reaſoning upon its own perceptions. We can no more account for the relation between the paſſions of the mind and a ſet of features, than we can account for the relation between the ſounds of muſic and the paſſions; the eye is judge of the one without principles or rules, as the ear is of the other. It is impoſſible you ſhould not take notice of the remarkable difference of beauty

beauty in the ſame face, in a good and in ill humour; and, if the gentle paſſions in an indifferent face do not change it to perfect beauty, it is, becauſe nature did not originally model the features to the juſt and familiar expreſſion of thoſe paſſions, and the genuine expreſſions of nature can never be wholly obliterated. But it is neceſſary to obſerve, that the engaging import that forms beauty, is often the ſymbol of paſſions that, although pleaſing, are dangerous to virtue; and that a firmneſs of mind, whoſe caſt of feature is much leſs pleaſing, is more favourable to virtue. From the affinity between beauty and the paſſions it muſt follow, that beauty is relative, that is, a ſenſe of human beauty is confined to our ſpecies; and alſo, as far as we have a power over the paſſions, we are able to improve the face, and tranſplant charms into it; both of which obſervations have

have been often made. From the various principles of beauty, and the agreeable combinations, of which the face gives intelligence, ſprings that variety found in the ſtyle of beauty.

Complexion

Complexion is a kind of beauty that is pleaſing only by aſſociation. The brown, the fair, the black, are not any of them original beauty; but when the complexion is united in one picture on the imagination, with the aſſemblage that forms the image of the tender paſſions, with gentle ſmiles, and kind endearments, it is then inſeparable from our idea of beauty, and forms a part of it. From the ſame cauſe, a national ſet of features appear amiable to the inhabitants, who have been accuſtomed to ſee the amiable diſpoſitions through them. This obſervation reſolves a difficulty, that often occurs in the reflections of men on our preſent ſubject. We all ſpeak of beauty as if

if it were acknowledged and settled by a public ſtandard; yet we find, in fact, that people, in placing their affections, often have little regard to the common notions of beauty. The truth is, complexion and form being the charms that are viſible and conſpicuous, the common ſtandard of beauty is generally reſtrained to thoſe external attractions: but ſince perſonal grace and the engaging paſſions, although they cannot be delineated, have a more univerſal and uniform power, it is no wonder people, in reſigning their hearts, ſo often contradict the common received ſtandard. Accordingly, as the engaging paſſions and the addreſs are diſcovered in converſation, the tender attachments of people are generally fixed by an intercourſe of ſentiment, and ſeldom by a tranſient view, except in romances and novels. It is farther to be obſerved, that when once the affections are fixed, a new face with a higher degree

of

of beauty will not always have a higher degree of power to remove them, becauſe our affections ariſe from a ſource within ourſelves, as well as from external beauty; and when the tender paſſion is attached by a particular object, the imagination ſurrounds that object with a thouſand ideal embelliſhments that exiſt only in the mind of the lover.

The hiſtory of the ſhort life of beauty may be collected from what I have ſaid. In youth that borders on infancy, the paſſions are in a ſtate of vegetation, they only appear in full bloom in maturity; for which reaſon the beauty of youth is no more than the dawn and promiſe of future beauty. Thefeatures, as we grow into years, gradually form along with the mind: different ſenſibilities gather into the countenance, and become beauty there, as colours mount in a tulip, and enrich it. When the eloquent force and delicacy of ſentiment has

has continued ſome little time, age begins to ſtiffen the features, and deſtroy the engaging variety and vivacity of the countenance; the eye gradually loſes its fire, and is no longer the mirror of the agreeable paſſions. Finally, old age furrows the face with wrinkles, as a barbarous conqueror overturns a city from the foundation, and tranſitory beauty is extinguiſhed.

Beauty and elegance are nearly related, their difference conſiſts in this, that elegance is the image of the mind diſplayed in motion and deportment; beauty is an image of the mind in the countenance and form; conſequently beauty is of a more fixed nature, and owes leſs to art and habit.

When I ſpeak of beauty, it is not wholly out of my way to make a ſingular obſervation on the tender paſſion in our ſpecies. Innocent and virtuous

love casts a beauteous hue over human nature; it quickens and strengthens our admiration of virtue, and our detestation of vice; it opens our eyes to our imperfections, and gives us a pride in excelling; it inspires us with heroic sentiments, generosity, a contempt of life, a boldness for enterprize, chastity, and purity of sentiment. It takes a similitude to devotion, and almost deifies the object of passion. People whose breasts are dulled with vice, or stupified by nature, call this passion romantic love; but when it was the mode, it was the diagnostic of a virtuous age. These symptons of heroism spring from an obscure principle, that in a noble mind unites itself with every passionate view in life; this nameless principle is distinguished by endowing people with extraordinary powers and enthusiasm in the pursuit of their favourite wishes, and by disgust and disappointment when we arrive at the point where our wishes seem to be completed. It has made great

conquerors

conquerors despise dangers and death in their way to victory, and sigh afterwards when they had no more to conquer.

Chap. IV.

From external beauty we come to the charms of conversation and writing. Words, by representing ideas, become the picture of our thoughts, and communicate them with the greatest fidelity. But they are not only the signs of sensible ideas, they exhibit the very image and distinguishing likeness of the mind that uses them.

Conversation does not require the same merit to please that writing does. The human soul is endued with a kind of natural expression, which it does not acquire. The expression I speak of consists in the significant modulations and tones of voice, accompanied, in unaffected people, by a propriety of gesture. This native language was not intended by nature to represent the transitory ideas that come

by the ſenſes to the imagination, but the paſſions of the mind and its emotions only; therefore modulation and geſture give life and paſſion to words; their mighty force in oratory is very conſpicuous: but although their effects be milder in converſation, yet they are very ſenſible; they agitate the ſoul by a variety of gentle ſenſations, and help to form that ſweet charm that makes the moſt trifling ſubjects engaging. This fine expreſſion, which is not learned, is not ſo much taken notice of as it deſerves, becauſe it is much ſuperſeded by the uſe of artificial and acquired language. The modern ſyſtem of philoſophy has alſo concurred to ſhut it out ſtom our reflections.

It is in converſation people put on all their graces, and appear in the luſtre of good-breeding. It is certain good-breeding that ſets ſo great a diſtinction between

between individuals of the ſame ſpecies, creates nothing new (I mean a good education) but only draws forth into proſpect with ſkill and addreſs the agreeable diſpoſitions and ſentiments that lay latent in the mind. You may call good-breeding artificial; but it is like the art of a gardener, under whoſe hand a barren tree puts forth its own bloom, and is enriched with its ſpecific fruit. It is ſcarce poſſible to conceive any ſcene ſo truly agreeable as an aſſembly of people elaborately educated, who aſſume a character ſuperior to ordinary life, and ſupport it with eaſe and familiarity.

The heart is won in converſation by its own paſſions. Its pride, its grandeur, its affections, lay it open to the enchantment of an inſinuating addreſs. Flattery is a groſs charm; but who is proof againſt a gentle and yielding diſpoſition, that infers your ſuperiority with a

delicacy ſo fine, that you cannot ſee the lines of which it is compoſed? Generoſity, diſintereſtedneſs, a noble love of truth that will not deceive, a feeling of the diſtreſſes of others, and greatneſs of ſoul, inſpire us with admiration along with love, and take our affections as it were by ſtorm; but above all, we are ſeduced by a view of the tender and affectionate paſſions; they carry a ſoft infection, and the heart is betrayed to them by its own forces. If we are to judge from ſymptoms, the ſoul that engages us ſo powerfully by its reflected glances is an object of infinite beauty. I obſerved before, that the modulations of the human voice that expreſs the ſoul, move us powerfully; and indeed we are affected by the natural emotions of the mind expreſſed in the ſimpleſt language: in ſhort, the happy art that in converſation and the intercourſe of life, lays hold upon our affections, is but a juſt addreſs

addreſs to the engaging paſſions in the human breaſt. But this ſyren power like beauty is the gift of Nature.

Soft pleaſing ſpeech and graceful outward ſhow,
No arts can gain them, but the gods beſtow. POPE's HOM.

From the various combinations of the ſeveral endearing paſſions and lofty ſentiments, ariſe the variety of pleaſing characters that beautify human ſociety.

Wit

There is a different ſource of pleaſure in converſation from what I have ſpoken of, called wit; which diverts the world ſo much, that I cannot venture to omit it, although delicacy and a refined taſte heſitate a little, and will not allow its value to be equal to its currency. Wit deals largely in alluſion and whimſical ſimilitudes; its countenance is always double, and it unites the true and the

fantaſtic by a nice gradation of colouring that cannot be perceived. You obſerve that I am only ſpeaking of the ready wit of converſation.

Wit is properly called in to ſupport a converſation, where the heart or affections are not concerned; and its proper buſineſs is to relieve the mind from ſolitary inattention, where there is no room to move it by paſſion; the mind's eye, when diſengaged, is diverted by being fixed upon a vapour, that dances, as it were, on the ſurface of the imagination, and continually alters its aſpect: the motley image, whoſe comic ſide we had only time to ſurvey, is too unimportant to be attentively conſidered, and luckily vaniſhes before we can view it on every ſide. Shallow folks expect that thoſe who diverted them in converſation, and made happy *bon mots*, ought to write well; and imagine that they themſelves were made

made to laugh by the force of genius: but they are generally disappointed when they see the admired character descend upon paper. The truth is, the frivolous turn and habit of a comic companion, is almost diametrically opposite to true genius, whose natural exercise is deep and slow-paced reflection. You may as well expect that a man should like Cæsar form consistent schemes for subduing the world, and employ the principal part of his time in catching flies. I have often heard people express a surprise, that Swift and Addison, the two greatest masters of humour of the last age, were easily put out of countenance, as if pun, mimickry, or repartee, were the offspring of genius.

Whatever similitude may be between humour in writing, and humour in conversation, they are generally found to require different talents. Humour in writing is the offspring of reflection, and is by nice touches and labour brought

to

to wear the negligent air of nature; whereas, wit in converſation is an enemy to reflection, and glows brighteſt when the imagination flings off the thought the moment it ariſes, in its genuine new-born dreſs. Men a little elevated by liquor ſeem to have a peculiar facility at ſtriking out the capricious and fantaſtic images that raiſe our mirth; in fact, what we generally admire in ſallies of wit, is the nicety with which they touch upon the verge of folly, indiſcretion, or malice, while at the ſame time they preſerve thought, ſubtilety, and good-humour; and what we laugh at is the motly appearance, whoſe whimſical conſiſtency we cannot account for.

People are pleaſed at wit for the ſame reaſon that they are fond of diverſion of any kind, not for the worth of the thing, but becauſe the mind is not able to bear an intenſe train of thinking; and yet the ceaſing of thought is inſufferable, or rather

ther impoſſible. In ſuch an uneaſy dilemma, the unſteady excurſions of wit give the mind its natural action, without fatigue, and relieve it delightfully, by employing the imagination without requiring any reflection. Thoſe who have an eternal appetite for wit, like thoſe who are ever in queſt of diverſion, betray a frivolous minute genius, incapable of thinking.

Chap. V. Writing.

Fine writing is but an eaſy picture of nature, as it ariſes to view upon the imagination. It is the expreſſion of our firſt thoughts, or at leaſt of what ought to be ſo; and we are ſurpriſed in the moſt celebrated writings, to find that they are wholly familiar to us, and ſeem to be exactly what we ourſelves think and would ſay; and bad writers ſeem to have been under ſome reſtraint, that put them out of a path that lay directly before them. Would you not then think, that fine writing ſhould be very common?

But

But I muſt pray you to recollect, that elegance, though it conſiſts chiefly in propriety and eaſe, yet it is attained by very few. I have already intimated the reaſon: true taſte and ſentiment lie deep in the mind, often incorporated with prejudices; and it requires vaſt judgment to bring the beauteous ore to light, and to refine it. I ſhould not be impartial and candid, if I did not own to you that learning, in much the greater part of mankind, diſtorts the genius as much as laced ſtays do the body; oppreſſes the natural ſeeds of propriety and beauty in the imagination; and renders men ever incapable of writing or even thinking well. When you except a few men of diſtinguiſhed talents, ladies both write and ſpeak more agreeably than ſcholars. If you aſk me the reaſon of this, I muſt inform you, that the eaſy and natural excurſions of the imagination are ſeldom checked in ladies; while the enſlaved pupils of colleges and ſchools in tender youth are forced into

aukward imitations, or dreary ungrateful tracts, where genius or beauty were never ſeen. The manner of the ancient ſchools was to learn by ſuch familiar converſations as you have at times engaged in; by which means, inſtead of forcing a nauſeous draught of learning upon youth, their genius was charmed forth by curioſity and emulation; the latent powers of the mind were gently unbound; and the generous ardor and pleaſure that ran originally through their enquiries, gave a warmth, a genuine turn and natural beauty to their ideas. Can there be a ſtronger proof that learning has taken a wrong biaſs, than that the preſent common ſenſe of mankind has judged learning in converſation to be pedantic and ill-breeding? Whereas the ſoul has a thirſt for knowledge, which no mode can take away; and it is no more in the power of faſhion to eradicate the charms and deſires of curioſity, than the ſenſe of beauty.

beauty. There is a truth which I would ſtrongly inculcate, and which is intimated throughout this little diſcourſe; it is, that moſt people have more light, judgment, and genius latent within their breaſts by far than they are able to draw forth or employ; that the utmoſt ſkill and addreſs is requiſite to tune thoſe fine ſtrings of the ſoul, if I may call them ſo, and bring into execution the harmony they are capable of; and that the perfection of thoſe powers, whatever they be, is the higheſt degree of improvement to which any perſon's genius can attain.

etters. Letters of buſineſs, of compliment, and friendſhip, form generally the compaſs of a lady's writing; for which, perhaps, the beſt rule that can be given is to neglect all rules. The ſame unaffected grace and propriety which animate your actions and converſation, cannot fail to charm univerſally upon paper: when your

your ſtyle has taken the familiar turn and eaſy ſpirit of your words, and rejected the air of premeditation that ſteals in upon ſtudy, then will it be agreeable beyond imagination; turns of wit and compliment, that come without being ſought for, are very pleaſing in this familiar compoſition that approaches ſo near to diſcourſe; but they ought to be ſuch as might paſs with grace in converſation.

Shall we attempt to diſtinguiſh the moſt remarkable excellencies of the writings of the great men who have paſſed through life before us, and form clear ideas of thoſe beauties that muſt charm mankind to the end of the world? Writing is but the converſation of abſent people; let us conſider it in this familiar light; we have little to do with criticiſm, which is a perfect art; we are only travellers in a tour of pleaſure, who are taking a curſory view of the moſt diſtinguiſhed beauties

beauties of writing; we may walk with great pleaſure in a flower-garden, and cheer the eye with the gay tincts of roſes and lilies, without the minute knowledge of a botaniſt or floriſt.

Writers, as I obſerved, are abſent acquaintance; and the beauties of writing are no other than the qualities that would charm us in an agreeable friend, at an hour when the ſoul is thoughtful and inquiſitive; for the mind in reading ſeems to be in a middle ſtate, between converſation and reflection. It has not the levity of converſation; its attention to the weight of thought is not diverted by geſticulation; nor yet is it in ſo high a tone, as in penſive ſolitude.

You require it as an abſolute condition, previous to any kind of familiarity, that the perſons you converſe with have a ſtrict attention to truth, to honeſty, and decency:

decency: and the ſame attention is abſolutely neceſſary in writings deſtined to pleaſe ſucceeding ages. It is true, that ſome writers amongſt the moderns have had the preſumption to draw their pens in defiance to truth and decency, and have assumed characters as writers, which they themſelves would deſpiſe in an acquaintance. Deiſts, while they have expreſſed the higheſt veneration and reſpect for revelation, have taken infinite pains to undermine and expoſe it by oblique and covert means. Nothing but the caprice of mode, and an unaccountable blindneſs that attends a preſent mode, could hinder them from obſerving the unworthineſs of their conduct, and the baſeneſs of mind they betray; or make them imagine that fame will attend on prevarication, and a ſly deceit in writing, which is abject and infamous in life, and will for ever be the mark of a contemptible character. In this tract of

vile duplicity and proſtitution of heart have trod Hobbes, Shafteſbury, Bolingbroke, and ſome authors, French and Engliſh, now alive, who being ſtill in the liſts, and capable of ſeeking fame by generous and liberal methods, I ſhall not name. The ſtrange manner and the artifice of theſe writers at firſt ſurprize; but the human heart, that naturally deteſts diſhoneſty, refuſes them fame; and in half an age they are conſidered only as the patrons of licentiouſneſs; and to make their infamy remarkable, they are only remembered and honoured by the vicious.

Decency is the habit which a noble train of thinking fixes upon the mind; and it is related to religion, becauſe religion more than any other object ennobles our ideas. Piety is eminently neceſſary in a writer who is a candidate for the fame of ages. Inſtead of quoting Quintilian and

and Tully in proof of my aſſertion, who certainly underſtood the qualifications of a good writer as well as any modern gentlemen, and were not prejudiced by chriſtianity, I will lay open the reaſon of it. The ideas of religion are all vaſt and affecting; and they open to the mind proſpects by far more grand than thoſe of this life. How does the mind expand to graſp an idea of eternity, infinity, or omnipreſence? What ſublime dignity does the intercourſe of the deity beſtow on the human ſtate? If you look into Milton's Paradiſe Loſt, you will be ſenſible what grand ideas even hell has furniſhed the poet with. Enthuſiaſm is the very ſoul of poetry, and there is ſuch an indiſſoluble connection between them, that the ſame word in the learned languages was indifferently applied to a poet and to a prophet. Now, madam, let the ideas of religion be thrown out of doors, what can be ſubſtituted in

Wit. — Humour & Raillery

their ſtead? Wit, humour, and raillery are pleaſing in the levities and play-hours of the ſoul; but they muſt not pretend to admiration, which attends only on elevation and grandeur of thought.

Enthuſiaſm natural to the mind of Man.

Enthuſiaſm, more or leſs, is an inſeparable appendange of the mind of man. The novel projectors in philoſophy and religion may ridicule it, and ſeriouſly exclaim againſt the folly of it; but they only quarrel with nature; which, after all, right or wrong, will form our pleaſures and pains. If they could, by their preſcriptions, amend and alter her laws, then might men take their plan into conſideration: but ſince nature is inflexible, and will continue the ſame notwithſtanding their fine projects of improvement, they are but idle vain prattlers; and ſuch is the partiality of nature on this head, that the mind of man is incapable of any exalted pleaſure that charms the ſoul in

its

its hours of reflection, or that brings beauty to the dwelling of thought, unleſs it be enthuſiaſtic and beyond life. I do not plead for the manifeſt abuſes of enthuſiaſm, no more than I do for the exorbitancies and ungoverned ſallies of any other paſſion or appetite; I only mean, that we are as much bound down by fate to receive our ſublime pleaſures by it, as we are obliged to find beauty in the human form. Now religion, particularly revelation, or an intercourſe between God and man, is the very eſſence of natural Enthuſiaſm. Homer, Virgil, and Milton, were ſo ſenſible of this truth, that with the faireſt endowment of natural genius and rapture that ever enriched mankind, they would not venture on any thing worthy of univerſal admiration, without introducing an actual revelation, and raiſing the ſubject by the grand ideas peculiar to religion.

The general air of truth, honeſty, and decency are the paſſports of a writer; without which he can have no pretence to the eſteem of readers of worth. Let us now conſider the qualifications that render an author an intereſting and admired companion of our leiſure hours.

ublime ixture of error, uriosity xultati n.

The firſt and nobleſt ſource of delight in works of genius, without competition, ariſes from the ſublime. The ſublime, by an authority which the ſoul is utterly unable to reſiſt, takes poſſeſſion of our attention, and of all our faculties, and abſorbs them in aſtoniſhment. The paſſion it inſpires us with is evidently a mixture of terror, curioſity, and exultation: but they are ſtamped with a majeſty, that beſtows on them a different air and character from thoſe paſſions on any other occaſion. In the ſublime we feel ourſelves alarmed, our motions are ſuſpended, and we remain for ſome time until the emotion

tion wears off, wrapped in silence and inquisitive horror.

The combination of passions in the sublime, renders the idea of it obscure. No doubt the sensation of fear is very distinct in it; but it is equally obvious, that there is something in the sublime more than this abject passion. In all other terrors the soul loses its dignity, and as it were shrinks below its usual size: but at the presence of the sublime, although it be always awful, the soul of man seems to be raised out of a trance; it assumes an unknown grandeur; it is seized with a new appetite, that in a moment effaces its former little prospects and desires; it is rapt out of the sight and consideration of this diminutive world, into a kind of gigantic creation, where it finds room to dilate itself to a size agreeable to its present nature and grandeur: it overlooks the Appenines, and

the clouds upon them, and ſees nothing in view around it but immenſe objects. In the poets language it flies, it ſoars, it purſues a beauty in the madneſs of rapture, that words or deſcription cannot contain; and if theſe expreſſions be extravagant and improper in the ordinary commerce of life, they yet exactly deſcribe the intellectual and real ſtate of the mind at the preſence of the ſublime.

The ſublime enters into the principles of taſte with ſuch diſtinction, and rules the human ſpirit with ſuch abſolute ſovereignty, that I would fain diſcover the origin and nature of its power; but fate ſeems to have covered it over with myſtery, the greateſt writers have either ſtopped ſhort, or failed in the attempt, and I am ſafe enough although I turn aſide, and leave it in the ſacred obſcurity in which it has ſo long been veiled: however, I may, by an hypotheſis,

potheſis, attempt to give you an intelligible idea of the manner in which it affects us: I have a licence from cuſtom for doing ſo; for I muſt inform you, that modern philoſophers often take the liberty of forming ſyſtems merely for the ſake of illuſtration, and to reſolve difficulties, without thinking themſelves obliged to give a demonſtration of the truth of their ſyſtem. If it tends to make that conceivable which was before inconceivable; the inventors ſuppoſe that they have done ſome ſervice to ſcience.

The ſyſtem I am going to lay before you, is that of a friend of mine, who was a true lover of knowledge. He found little ſatisfaction in the philoſophy of colleges and ſchools, particularly in thoſe enquiries he thought of moſt importance: he had withdrawn himſelf from the trifling buſtle of the little world, to converſe

with his own heart, and end a ſtormy life in obſcure quiet. One day after dinner, we walked out to indulge on our favourite topics. Our excurſion terminated at a rock, whoſe baſe is waſhed by the Weſtern Ocean. It was one of thoſe fine days in Auguſt, when the cool of the evening brought on a refreſhing ſweetneſs. We ſat down to reſt, and enjoy the proſpect of the ſea, that ſtretched before us beyond the limits of the eye. The ſun was juſt ſetting, and his laſt ſoftened beams flying to the ſhore, ſeemed to dip in a thouſand waves, and leave in the waters the blaze they loſt. We had been reading Homer on our way to the ſea-ſide. When we ſat down, our converſation turned on the ſtrange power of the ſublime. It is eaſy, ſays the thoughtful philoſopher, to deſcribe the impreſſions the ſublime makes on the mind, and this is all the writers on this ſubject have hitherto

hitherto done with any ſucceſs; but is it impoſſible, from a due attention to the ſymptoms, to unravel its meaning, and diſcover the ſpring of the ſilent and inquiſitive aſtoniſhment it impreſſes on the ſpirit of man? I am ſenſible a juſt explication of the ſublime muſt account for all its effects, as well for the noble elevation and the charming rapture, as for the terror it beſtows. If I can produce a cauſe that accounts ſufficiently for all the ſymptoms, and no other can be given, then mine ought by all rules of good reaſoning to be admitted for the true one, however novel it appears.

In order to proceed to the diſcovery we deſire to make, let us turn our views to objects remarkably ſublime, and from them obtain what intelligence we can. Obſerve this mountain that riſes ſo high on the left; if we had been farther removed from it, you might ſee behind it other

other mountains riſing in ſtrange confuſion, the fartheſt off almoſt loſt in the diſtance, yet great in the obſcurity, your imagination labours to travel over them, and the inhabitants ſeem to reſide in a ſuperior world. But here you have a different proſpect; the next mountain covers all the reſt from your view, and by its nearer approach, preſents diſtinctly to your eye objects of new admiration. The rocks on its ſides meet the clouds in vaſt irregularity; the penſive eye traces the rugged precipice down to the bottom, and ſurveys there the mighty ruins that time has mouldered and tumbled below. It is eaſy in this inſtance to diſcover that we are terrified and ſilenced into awe, at the *veſtiges* we ſee of immenſe power; and the more manifeſt (are) the appearances of diſorder, and the neglect of contrivance, the more plainly we feel the boundleſs might theſe rude monuments are owing to. But beſides

sides this silent fear, we feel our curiosity roused from its deepest springs in the soul; and while we tremble, we are seized with an exquisite delight, that attends on sublime objects only. The same mixed sensation weighs upon us, when we see an ocean disturbed and agitated in storms; or a forest roaring, and bending under the force of the tempest. We are struck by it with more calmness, but equal grandeur, in the starry heavens: the silence, the unmeasured distance, and the unknown power united in that prospect, render it very awful in the deepest serenity. Thunder, with broken bursts of lightning through black clouds; the view of a cataract, whose billows fling themselves down with eternal rage; or the uneasing sound of the falling waters by night; the howling of animals in the dark: all these produce the sublime, by the association of the idea of invisible immense power.

Fear, Curiosity, and Delight objects of Nature

The

The ſoul of man naturally pays homage to unſeen power. He feels obſcure hopes, and obſcure fears, which become a religious paſſion, and diſtinguiſh him more than any other difference between him and the other inhabitants of the earth. The religious paſſion, attended with leſs tumult, but more conſtancy than the other paſſions, calls upon his heart in the majeſty of darkneſs and ſilence, and is the ſource of the ſublime ſenſation we are treating of. I ſee ſeveral objections crouding to your mind againſt my hypotheſis; but hear me out, for I intend to obviate them all.

The object of the religious paſſion is no idea, it is unknown; therefore the paſſion itſelf is obſcure, and wants a name; but its effects are very remarkable, for they form the peculiar character of human nature. Curioſity and hope carry with them the plaineſt ſymptoms of a paſſion

paſſion that wanders, and is aſtray for its object. In their anxious ſearch, they unite themſelves with every great proſpect in life, whoſe completion lies in the dark: but when we arrive at the point we propoſed, we are fully ſenſible that curioſity and hope have been deceived, the enjoyment in our power, whatever it be, falls infinitely below our expectations, yet the alacrity of the mind feels no decay by diſappointment; we ſet out immediately with renewed vigour in purſuit of ſomething farther, and nothing but death puts an end to the anxiety. Theſe paſſions are exceedingly alarmed, at the appearances of the exceſſive power that gives us the idea of the ſublime. In the diſorder and confuſion of ſeas in ſtorms, or when lofty woods ſtruggle with high winds, we are ſtruck with an humiliating awe, ſurprize, and ſuſpence: the mind views the effects of boundleſs power with ſtill amazement: it recoils upon itſelf

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in a paſſion made up of terror, joy, and rapture, and feels in ſentiment theſe queſtions: *Who is the author of this? What is he to me? Is he the object of my eternal curioſity, of my mighty fears, and hopes?* I appeal to the feelings of every man, if his paſſions in theſe circumſtances be not exactly applicable to this confuſed intereſted ſtate of mind, whether he diſentangles or reflects on his own ideas or no.

There is nothing more diſputed than the origin of the idea of divinity. All nations, however barbarous, have it; and our lateſt diſcoveries prove that the relations of atheiſt nations are all fabulous, and that the ſavages of every quarter of the globe look up to a ſupernatural power. From the univerſality of the idea, men who did not ſufficiently examine its origin ſuſpected, and actually taught, that we had an innate idea of God. The groſſneſs

groſſneſs and want of preciſion with which they advanced this doctrine, afforded Mr. Locke the happieſt opportunity imaginable of triumphing over them, and of deducing religion and the idea of the deity from ſenſible ideas, and from the mere agency of reaſon, agreeable to his general ſyſtem. It is true, we have not an innate idea of God; but we a thouſand times feel the intruded influence of a mighty unknown power, that muſt, by the unavoidable tranſition the mind makes from the effect to the cauſe, give riſe to the idea of divine power. Senſible ideas, indeed, and the paſſing ſhew of this external world, divert the attention of the mind from its religious feelings; but as ſenſible ideas recede from the imagination, and leave us to a ſolitary intellectual ſtate of mind, we find an awful and obſcure preſence ſurround us, that beſtows on the ſoul an elevation and enthuſiaſm that do not attend on external ideas.

All mankind, whoſe common ſenſe is not diverted by ſyſtem, will agree, that darkneſs, ſolitude, and ſilence, naturally oppreſs the mind by a tremendous and ſublime ſenſation. It is further evident, that they produce not this effect by any active power of their's, but merely by ſtripping the imagination of its ſenſible ideas, of the noiſe, the mirth, and light that diverted its attention, and leaving it to its naked ſtate and feelings; conſequently, that the great influence that then riſes upon the ſoul, and dwells upon it in terrors, is the effect of a power that has been always preſent to it, altho' it has not been always obſerved, on account of the interpoſition of the tranſitory ideas of ſenſe. In ſhort, it appears from a great variety of obſervations and reflected lights, that the human ſoul is always oppreſſed by a mighty preſence, whoſe obſcurity and ſtillneſs only keep it out of our attention when the mind is employed

This awful, mighty Presence, so far
from oppressing the mind with terror
is affected with great & sublime

employed on exterior objects. To avoid this awful preſence it is, that we for ever ſeek amuſement and company, and that any diverſion, however inſipid and trifling in itſelf, becomes to us a pleaſing relief, merely by taking up our attention. Reaſon ſmiles at the puerility of our amuſements. The very ſlaves of pleaſure hold them in contempt, and acknowledge they will not bear examination: yet the wiſe and the vain find ſolitude alike inſupportable, and alike deſire the company and diverſion they deſpiſe.

Becauſe the philoſophers of our days can aſſign no form, nor ſize, nor colour, to the object of their ſublime awe, they conclude it to be vain and ſuperſtitious: they take upon them to decide poſitively, that nature in the formation of the human mind has acted an unmeaning part; and where ſhe appears remarkably ſolemn and regular, in her nobleſt production,

has been abſurd and puerile. Her vaſt ſagacity, and the deſign that always appears in her works of a lower order, ought ſurely to procure her a degree of confidence, and give ſome ſuſpicions that ſhe did not act wholly at random in the plan of the human mind. The truth is, the impreſſion of this obſcure preſence, however it be felt, is beyond the verge of the philoſophy of the ideas of ſenſe. The diſciples of this philoſophy cannot upon their principles admit that an object which neither the memory can treaſure up, nor the imagination form, has been preſent to the mind. They are not able to conceive that an object has been there which was not repreſented by a ſenſible idea, and which makes itſelf felt only by its influence. But let it be conſidered, however the conſequences may claſh with this or that ſyſtem, that awe is a relative idea, and bears as neceſſary a relation to ſomething either ideal or intellectual that impreſſes terror,

terror, as viſion does to ſomething ſeen. Let it be further attended to, that the awe which ſurrounds us in ſolitude, in deep ſilence, and in darkneſs, is not acquired by habit, by aſſociation, religious tenets, or prejudices; ſeeing that it is not confined to particular nations or ages, but that it is inſeparable from the human race at all æras of time, be their religion what it will: and that thoſe men who have moſt effectually caſt off the weakneſſes of the human kind, have diſcovered the plaineſt ſymptoms of the awe I ſpeak of: but we muſt carefully diſtinguiſh between common accidental fear, and this noble ſenſation that elevates whilſt it over-awes. Men often bear ſilence, ſolitude, and night, without diſtinct or ideal fear, ſuch as is occaſioned by tales of ghoſts or goblins; but the ſtill important attention, and ſolemn ſwell of mind, that is a concomitant of obſcurity, of lonelineſs, and of deep ſilence, appears

The ſublime influence of groves and lonely vales is not fantaſtic, or a work of the imagination: it is a moſt conſtant uniform effect in the ſame circumſtances; and the change it makes in our ideas, or rather the creation of new beauty it beſtows on them, which was never had from ſenſe; and the mighty powers it beſtows on us, are evidently ſupernatural. To ſay that the inſpiration of poetry and enthuſiaſm, which are the moſt ſurpriſing and violent effects we know of, are produced by a *non-entity*, or by the native force of the imagination, is utterly unphiloſophic and abſurd. It is further manifeſt, upon reflection, that the ſupernatural preſence is not confined to wood or dale; not to theſe long mountains beſide us; nor to the winding ſhores, and hollow ſeas: it always meets the penſive meditating mind; in the remoteſt parts of the earth we are at no diſtance from it, and in the darkneſs of night

night it poſſeſſes us. Say, ye ſtars of heaven, almoſt loſt in immenſe diſtance, does not the Father of Being ſuſtain and cheriſh worlds around you, who receive life and rapture from his preſence?

If the univerſal ſpirit had not always dwelt in the ſoul, enthuſiaſm would not be infectious, nor could fanatic preachers communicate it at all times to their audience. The enthuſiaſtic orator expreſſes his own feelings, and his diſcourſe is infectious; not by the production of any new and foreign paſſion, but by fixing the attention to the great ſenſations of the ſoul. If they were not there before, the preacher could no more raiſe them, than he could give a man born blind the idea of colours. Perſons of a religious and ſolitary caſt of thought often experience theſe inſpirations, when prayer or meditation have led the ſoul into retirement, and taken external ideas

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out of its attention; and the religious fanatic experiences the ſame divine favour that the poet does in his gloomy foreſt, or beſide his conſecrated ſtream. The ſagacious ancients were ſo ſenſible of the identity of the ſpirit that inſpired both, that they gave the ſame appellation to the prophet and poet, as I ſaid before.

When we have carried our views thus far, it is eaſy to diſcover the ſprings of polytheiſm. The imagination found the divine idea riſing before it in a variety of circumſtances, and worſhiped it under the ſeveral diſtinctions in which it appeared. The Greeks, the fathers of thought and ſublime knowledge, always nicely obſerved the difference between the native powers of the mind over its ſtock of ſenſible ideas, and the ſublime influence to which it was paſſive. They traced the latter through its various appearances, and never failed to attribute it

it to divine power; ſometimes to the Muſes, ſometimes to Apollo, to the Furies, to Pan, to the Sylvan deities, and to the genius of the place; they never miſtook the ſupernatural preſence, but only divided it out, according as the imagination happened to be ſtruck, and to the concomitant external ideas.

It was not fear made the gods, but God made his preſence known by an awe that does not attend on ſenſible objects. If man falls down to worſhip in the groves, it is becauſe the ſacred impreſſion he feels in ſolitude and obſcurity makes him ſenſible of the preſence of inviſible power. From what I have juſt ſaid, it is eaſy to conceive the reaſon why men educated in the country, and thoſe eſpecially whoſe employments are in the fields, are in general more religious than the inhabitants of towns and cities.

Terror

Terror is the firſt impreſſion that meets us in the ſolitary preſence; and the bulk of mankind have only feeling enough when they are alone to create uneaſineſs, and a confuſed gloom that drives them to ſeek for company and amuſement; but men of more delicate ſenſations find admiration and extaſy along with fear. Delight and fear are paſſions of almoſt oppoſite natures; yet they are united in this unknown object, in an immeaſureable degree. By all the known rules of reaſoning from mechanic principles, the fear of unknown power ought to be much more faint and dull than the fear of known power; and in men educated in doubt or diſbelief of a future ſtate, this fear of unknown power ſhould be hardly perceptible, or active; and thus it would certainly be, if it were the iſſue of ſenſible ideas, or of reaſon; but in fact, all men who have leiſure to obſerve their own internal ſenſations, find the ter-

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ror of unknown power far beyond all limits, and beyond all degrees of known evil. When we ſee the limits of evil, we immediately ſee that it loſes a great deal in our imagination. Men eaſily bear impriſonment, poverty, ſickneſs, and even great degrees of pain; but the obſcure deſpair, whoſe object we know not, is blacker than the grave, and more terrible than death, and to plunge from it men commit ſuicide. Every calamity of this life is ſupportable, and we ſuffer them by choice rather than death, until they bring us to a penſive ſolitary ſtate of mind, in which we feel the preſſure of unknown power; and then men often make the cruel choice, and ſeek death as a welcome releaſe from the gloomy terrors that ſink them. Fanatic preachers make admirable uſe of this ſtate of mind; for experience ſhews, that when melancholy has continued ſome time, and the ſoul ſeems to itſelf ut-

terly loſt, ſecret fits of joy and tranſport beam in upon it through the gloom. Dealers in the ſpirit therefore take ſpecial care to raiſe enthuſiaſtic terrors firſt in their followers, and to bring deſpair and reprobation full in the ſoul's view; under which ſome of them actually kill themſelves; but as the mind cannot long remain in this ſtate, and the intenſe poſſeſſion of religious melancholy naturally turns to extaſy and rapture, enthuſiaſts, from a ſtate of deſpair, paſs ſuddenly to a ſtate of joy and tranſport, which is eaſily miſtaken for election and the kind voice of the Divinity. It is lucky for fanatic preachers of all ages, that the bulk of mankind are ignorant, and incapable of obſerving, that the divine preſence they boaſt of has been common to every religion; that religion only unites an univerſal paſſion to this or that ſet of doctrines and ideas; and that there is a ſyſtematic method of acquiring

ing the predeſtination and divine impulſe they feel with great certainty.

The rapture of enthuſiaſm is as contradictory to all rules of reaſoning from the received principles, as its fears. If it were the iſſue of our ſenſible ideas, and reflections made on them, it would never riſe to the force of ſenſible beauty; and all the warmeſt imagination could do, is to make approaches to the charms of colours, and of form, and to the beauties of ſmell and taſte. But the obſcure unknown good that mortals ſeek with ſuch anxiety is more than every joy and every good beſides. It is the love-ſick wiſh that brightens hope, the ſearch of which makes us paſs reſolutely through all the evils of life. Shall I call it ſupreme beauty? This is but a figurative name, of that beauty of which we have no conception. But does not the want of conception make it indifferent to us? No; an

an intelligence clearer than ſenſe, and ſtronger than reaſon, characteriſes it with rapture, and with inexpreſſible joy; and let us conceive of it as we will in theory, it is the load-ſtone to which the ſoul for ever tends with anxiety, in every unknown good and obſcure proſpect.

I obſerved before, that the remarkable curioſity and hope of our kind, are the ſymptoms of a wandering paſſion for a fugitive object neceſſary to our happineſs that is for ever near us, and for ever hides from us; hence proceed the perpetual diſcontent and care that harbour in the human breaſt: for it is evident, that be our poſſeſſions what they will, we cannot be content while we deſire or hope for any thing more than we poſſeſs; and that while this object of deſire is unknown, the ſymptoms muſt be exactly what they are, and man's purſuits muſt be wild, inconſiſtent, and unſatisfied.

ſatisfied. This fond unknown object, on account of the vaſtneſs of the paſſion with which it is ſought for, was by the antients called the *ſummum bonum*, or chief felicity. Whether there be ſuch an enjoyment in reality or no, the phantom, or viſionary expectation of it, is perſued by mortals with endleſs and unwearied care. It was a noble effort of human reaſon, bewildered in ignorance, to enquire for the object of its ſublime hopes. One who has a clear idea of the meaning of the antients in this great enquiry, can hardly refrain from ſmiling at Mr. Locke's ludicrous explication of it. If the queſtion had been what is the moſt delicious fare; or whether the beſt reliſh were to be found in apples, plumbs, or nuts; the preference undoubtedly ought to be given by every one to that which pleaſes him beſt; for there is no diſputing taſtes: but the queſtion here is, what is the vaſt object

of content and bliſs, for which all mankind have one common paſſion, and which every one who is not employed to procure the neceſſaries of life, ſets out in ſearch of with crouded ſails. The orphan mind, in its fond expectations, imagines it ſees a confuſed view of it in the firſt ideas of every thing that is beautiful, until poſſeſſion convinces us of our miſtake; but no diſappointments cure the paſſion itſelf; we are actuated by a ſenſe more preſent to us than demonſtration, that the object of it is always near us.

Man is ennobled and diſtinguiſhed from the other inhabitants of this earth by the univerſal paſſion I ſpeak of. If he were bereft of it, he would fall to the condition of a ſagacious brute. He would, in ſuch caſe, as ſoon as he had eaten and drank to ſatisfy nature, lie down on the next ſunny bank, and repoſe in thoughtleſs content. We ſhould have no heroes, no miſers,

miſers, and no mighty projects. Human love, that now refines and ennobles the ſoul, would never riſe beyond the brutal appetite. Happineſs would be cheaply attained, and we ſhould never be uneaſy, but when in actual diſtreſs. But then our happineſs would be poor and taſteleſs; and indeed the mere glimmering hope of the obſcure enthuſiaſtic delight which we never enjoy, with all its endleſs cares and diſappointments, is infinitely more noble and raviſhing, than the unbroken ſupine content of ſenſible enjoyment. What makes content ſound ſo fine in the human ear, is the ſatiation of the mighty unknown want, which we are obliged to unite in our idea of content, becauſe without it we can never enjoy undiſturbed unwiſhing tranquillity. But this heart-eaſing, this gilded content, is not the content of brutes; for as they have no deſires but to allay the preſent appetite, their eaſe is ſtupid indifference. The an-

nihilation of that bright-beaming human hope, that travels on before us during life, would be attended with a want of curiosity; nothing would be new to us, nor nothing old: we ſhould run into few errors, and few cares; we ſhould be wiſe, content, and worthleſs. Thus are our miſery, our folly, and our grandeur, connected and inſeparable.

I have given you, madam, this enthuſiaſtic gentleman's rhapſody on the ſublime, which I leave to your reflection, with this caution only, that before you judge, you conſult the feelings of your own mind, in the ſame retired and calm ſtate he did. I now proceed to a ſeparate ſource of the ſublime, which we diſcover in our own breaſts, and obſerve with particular pleaſure, becauſe it is an undoubted evidence of the grandeur of human nature. I took ſome notice of it before, when I ſpoke of elegance.

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We find in ourſelves a ſenſe of the baſe and of the noble; to the one are annexed by nature, ſhame and bluſhes; to the other, pride and exultation. We may indeed be cheated by appearances; baſe actions may be diſguiſed, or wholly covered from view, and loſt in the concomitant circumſtances; but the ſenſe itſelf is conſtantly true to appearances; we are for ever prejudiced againſt the mean and baſe, and we always exult in a noble and diſintereſted part. That this direction of the ſentiment was not formed by the precepts of philoſophers, or by the management of politicians, as ſenſual writers pretend, is evident from hence, that it is not in the power of art or management to alter or warp it. We can no more be brought to approve what appears to us baſe, or to condemn noble and benevolent actions, while they appear ſo, than we can be managed to like the

ſcreaming of the owl, or the jarring of iron bars.

It is this ſentimental light without reflection which diſcovers to us, that it is great and exalted to contemn ſenſual pleaſures, riches, and mundane intereſts; and makes ſevere, ſelf-denying, ſuffering virtue appear an object of admiration. Generoſity, even when ill-placed, is ſtill noble, becauſe it demonſtrates a contempt for riches; and the love of truth is ſo, becauſe it ſhews a ſettled firm habit of virtue; for falſehood is the diſguiſe which ſhame beſtows on vice.

The ſoul, actuated and determined by its own haughty and elevated ſentiments of virtue and dignity, aſſerts fates and proſpects ſuperior to the low intereſts of this world. We are therefore charmed in the nobility of ſentiment, by this clear and manifeſt majeſty of the ſoul, juſt as beauty

beauty is delighted with the flattering view of itſelf in a mirror. The elevation every man feels in himſelf at a noble ſentiment, is a plain intuition of the ſublimity of his own ſpirit, and on that account it ſtrikes him with rapture and exultation. If all ages have acknowledged the grandeur of Alexander's anſwer to Parmenio, it is becauſe men in general feel in themſelves a loftier paſſion than that which can be ſatisfied with kingdoms and ſceptres. If we ſhould imagine that it was a mere paſſion for empire ſtimulated that great conqueror to his enterprizes, he himſelf informs us, with diſcontent, when he had no more to conquer, that he was not ſatisfied with empires and kingdoms. A paſſion to enjoy the ſovereignty of the whole world had nothing admirable in it; but the noble diſſatisfaction he expreſſed at the limits he found to his ambition, furniſhed an idea

to poets, to painters, and ſtatuaries, to form a grand picture of the hero.

Next to the ſublime, the paſſions form the moſt fruitful ſource of beauty in works of genius. The ſoul in paſſion diſplays reſources that ſurpriſe by their novelty and greatneſs. It employs an ingenuity and light that is not within the reach of reaſon, and endues us with powers of execution far above our ordinary ſtrength. From this ſudden proſpect of the extent and grandeur of the human ſpirit proceeds our attention to the workings of paſſion; we are eager to ſee it come forward in the tumult, and become viſible on the countenance; and we find the diſcovery of its new powers of great importance to us. The paſſions are alſo ſtrangely infectious; they lay hold on our affections by violence; they bear us away from a ſtate of indifference, and plunge us into concern and emotion. The mind that before

fore reſted upon itſelf ſelfiſh and alone, at the appearance of paſſion, in a moment feels it relation to mankind: it extends its feelings beyond ourſelves, and finds itſelf irreſiſtably engaged by the intereſts of others. The ſenſe of this relation, and particularly of its compaſſion, which is an undoubted evidence of the grandeur and generoſity of its own nature, delights it exceedingly, even in the midſt of its diſtreſſes for the ſorrows of others. The mixture of pity, of this ſublime exultation, and the curioſity that naturally impels us to deſcry the workings and manœuvres of the ſoul in diſtreſs, form the noble penſive pleaſure we feel at a tragedy, and the charm that engages us in a melancholy relation. The paſſions of brutes have little elevating or important in them; but it is not ſo always in deſcription, becauſe in the deſcription it is not the brute that is ſo much in view,

as the human mind and the human paſſions.

Another remarkable diviſion of the beauties of fine writing conſiſts in the imagery. Darkneſs, that ſtrips the imagination of viſible objects, becomes irkſome and melancholy. Light, that reſtores the picture of nature, diſſipates the gloom, and brings back joy along with it. The mind naturally abhors a ſolitary ſtate, and finds relief and enjoyment in a variety and ſucceſſion of objects, which accounts for the diſtinguiſhed beauty of imagery in writing. The objects of deſcription take life upon the imagination; a new creation ariſes in proſpect, and we are charmed at the enchantment of words. Great writers always paint ſtrongly their thoughts, and make them objects of view. You ſee Homer's heroes in action before you: when you begin to read him, you find yourſelf inſenſibly

ſibly taken by the hand, and led where he has a mind to fix your attention. You traverſe his fields of action, and almoſt fight his battles. Shakeſpeare preſerves in his characters the ſame ſtrong caſt of feature and turn of mind from the firſt ſpeech forward. You are acquainted with every one after the firſt appearance, and your attention is engaged as if you were amongſt your friends, and buſied in the tranſactions of neighbours. Almoſt every ſentence in Milton's poetic works is a picture. But it is neceſſary to obſerve, that in writing we are not ſo much moved by the exact picture of real life, or of objects, as we are by the colouring and ſtrokes of the imagination. To make myſelf underſtood, I muſt obſerve, that there is a greater ſenſibility in ſome men than in others; two perſons ſee the ſame objects, the ſame misfortunes, with very different feelings; their deſcriptions may be equally exact, but with very different effects. A man

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of ſenſibility finds words, and a language tender, paſſionate, and expreſſive of his feelings: you imagine he paints objects and actions, while he in reality paints paſſion, and affects us by the image of his own imagination. Great writers in fact ſeldom deſcend to a trivial exactneſs; it is ſufficient that they diſtinguiſh the objects they offer to view by ſome general lines, and then they move us by the enlivening ſenſations that touch us by ſympathy. The poet, who calls your imagination to his beloved groves and cryſtal ſprings, does not diſtinguiſh his trees into oak, aſh, or elm; he ſhews them neither regularly nor in confuſion; nor does he meaſure the windings of his ſtream, nor mark out the fords, the ſhallows, and depths: he juſt mentions the rural ſcene, and then proceeds to paint the engaging image of calm content, and of eaſy unſurfeiting joys, that are not objects of ſenſe, and yet are the real

real objects of beauty. This animated expreſſion is the very characteriſtic of great writers; but it is not by any means confined to great and important ſubjects; the moſt familiar ideas are equally capable of the tincture of ſenſibility. The flowing eaſy dreſs of the imagination, and the ſoft colouring the mind gives to common occurrences, are as becoming and beautiful over a lady's thoughts in her letters, as more ſtudied and laboured painting in the compoſition of philoſophers. It is not uncommon to find ladies paint finely in converſation, in the careleſs current of their thoughts; and indeed the vivacity and delicacy of imagination peculiar to your ſex, ſeem to have put this kind of charm into your hands. In the little remains of Sappho we ſee dangerous proofs of the enchantment of her painting; and probably it is happy that the reſt of the works of that ingenious Grecian lady are loſt.

Theſe

These three, the sublime, the passions, and the imagery, form the distinguished beauty of works of genius; but colours may be too glaring, and beauty itself overcharged or misplaced. The imagery should never confuse the attention, or withdraw it from the main design. They should imitate dress, whose art it is not to hide, but to lead the eye to the object of dress. Different subjects require different ornaments; a plain habit becomes a philosopher or an ecclesiastic, but you may with great propriety dress a lady going to a ball in tissue and diamonds. You can hardly be too lavish of your roses on the mantle of spring; but you must leave the dreary heath its unvariegated dusky robe. Mixed images confound your view, and give you unformed separate parts, instead of just pictures. The passions must be governed with the same chastity: the language of the heart is plain, it is simple; it is expressed in a few

The Sublime, The Passions, & Imagery, form the distinguishing of works of Genius.

few and unadorned words: but this ſimplicity, this plainneſs, is what men who feel not the paſſions find a difficulty to paint. To perſuade you of their emotion, they rave and bluſter like young players. It is one of Shakeſpeare's faults, that in the midſt of his nobleſt diſtreſſes, he often introduces philoſophic reflections, and deſcriptions that are generally very beautiful, but ill-placed. I do not take notice of this error to lower in your eſteem this extraordinary genius, who knew human nature better than all the philoſophers put together, and has given juſter pictures of it; but to guard you againſt the power of his charms, which are too apt to recommend his faults. It is from a great man we are to apprehend danger of being miſled.

Beſides the ſtriking beauties I mentioned, a writer of genius is always diſtinguiſhed by a ſtrong impreſſion of his genius

genius and a propriety of colouring, which form his peculiar character, and animate his works. Ordinary writers repeat a language whoſe ideas have nothing particular to catch the attention: they are read, but become unobſerved, like objects that we paſs by in the duſk of the evening: but a great writer fixes the image of his imagination upon his thoughts. You ſee plainly he does not repeat words that he learned, and are in every one's mouth, but ideas juſt as they lay in his own mind.

The maſtery of a writer, and the compaſs of his genius, appear conſpicuouſly in two points; the propriety and juſtneſs of his ſtyle, and the unbroken continuation and advance of his deſign from the beginning to the concluſion. By propriety of ſtyle I do not mean an inſipid evenneſs, and a murmur for ever returning upon the ear. The ſame waters glide

glide gently through meadows, and fling themſelves with tumult and bellowing over precipices. When in the courſe of a writer's ſubject he comes to lofty ideas, his tone of voice muſt become elevated and ſuperior: or when he leads you to peaceful country proſpects, his voice muſt be low like his reed; but lofty or low, you muſt hear the ſame voice. The variations muſt not be like the ſtrange tranſitions from a pipe to a trumpet, but like the ſame inſtrument perfectly in tune, that ſwells and falls into continued harmony. For the ſame reaſon he muſt avoid all harſh and dragged-in metaphors; they break the tenor; they diſturb the view, and turn our thoughts upon the labour of the writer. If we had proper expreſſions for every idea, metaphors had never been thought of. It is neceſſity gives them currency; and they ſhould not be uſed but when they are ſtronger and clearer than any proper expreſſion, and

when they ſeem to drop off the imagination upon the paper. Beſides a juſtneſs of ſtyle, a writer who aims at perfection, and deſires to leave a ſolid pleaſure on the mind, never ſuffers his attention to ſtray from his deſign; he always proceeds forward towards the goal, whether his pace be gentle and flowing, or impetuous and rapid. A view of ſeparated or mutilated parts, however beautiful, leave a ſenſible want in the mind, which is naturally delighted with ſeeing the complete and whole union of deſign.

It is agreed upon by moſt writers of good taſte, that the beauties of genius are only diſpoſed with propriety when they adorn virtue; but the reaſon is not ſo generally underſtood: it is this, vice is for ever ignoble, baſe, and terminates in mundane gratifications; for which reaſon, that dreſs which is formed by our ideas of beauty and grandeur, or

by

by the noble ſentiments that imply a ſuperiority of ſoul, is manifeſtly miſplaced in adorning vice, and is diſhoneſtly ſtolen from the wardrobe of virtue. A love of ſenſuality cannot be noble or great, nor can any means uſed to juſtify or to inculcate it be great, noble, or virtuous. Wherefore, the beautiful language ſometimes made uſe of by late writers for this purpoſe appears to be falſe and improper: when we read them, taſte revolts againſt inclination, and diſcovers the impoſture. In ſhort, the fine attire beſtowed on vice by genius, is like blooming garlands bound round a withered leafleſs tree.

I am going, madam, to dictate to ladies with an air of deciſion which I have no where elſe aſſumed, becauſe the ſentiment is yours: and indeed it may be eaſily diſtinguiſhed by the delicacy. You remember the diſguſt you expreſſed at the affectation of learning in your own ſex:

I will venture to unfold your thought, but you muſt not expect the ſame grace with which it fell from your lips.

A lady ſhould rather appear to think well than to ſpeak well of books: ſhe may ſhew the engaging light that good taſte and ſenſibility always diffuſe over converſation; ſhe may give inſtances of her ſenſe of great and affecting paſſages, becauſe they diſplay the fineneſs of her imagination, or the goodneſs of her heart; but all criticiſm beyond this ſits as aukwardly upon her as her grandfather's large ſpectacles. I would by all means have a lady know more than ſhe diſplays, becauſe it gives her unaffected powers in diſcourſe, for the ſame reaſon that a man's efforts are eaſy and firm, when his action requires not his full ſtrength. She ſhould by habit form her mind to the noble and the pathetic; and ſhe ſhould have an acquaintance with the fine arts, becauſe

cauſe they enrich and beautify the imagination; but ſhe ſhould carefully keep them out of view in the ſhape of learning, aud let them run through the eaſy vein of unpremeditated thought: for this reaſon ſhe ſhould never uſe nor even underſtand the terms of art: the gentlemen will occaſionally explain them to her. I knew a lady of vaſt addreſs who when a term of art came to be mentioned, always turned to the gentleman ſhe had a mind to compliment, and with uncommon grace aſked him the meaning of it; by this means ſhe gave men the air of ſuperiority they like ſo well, while ſhe held them in chains. No humour can be more delicate than this, which plays upon the tyrant, who requires an acknowledged ſuperiority of ſenſe as well as power from the weaker ſex.

There are few who have not felt the charms of muſic, and acknowledged its

expreſſions to be intelligible to the heart. It is a language of delightful ſenſations, that is far more eloquent than words; it breathes to the ear the cleareſt intimations: but how it was learned, to what origin we owe it, or what is the meaning of ſome of its moſt affecting ſtrains, we know not.

We feel plainly that muſic touches and gently agitates the agreeable and ſublime paſſions; that it wraps us in melancholy, and elevates in joy; that it diſſolves and inflames; that it melts us in tenderneſs, and rouſes to rage: but its ſtrokes are ſo fine and delicate, that, like a tragedy, even the paſſions that are wounded pleaſe; it ſorrows are charming, and its rage heroic and delightful; as people feel the particular paſſions with different degrees of force, their taſte of harmony muſt proportionably vary. Muſic then is a language directed to the paſſions; but

the rudeſt paſſions put on a new nature, and become pleaſing in harmony: let me add, alſo, that it awakens ſome paſſions which we perceive not, in ordinary life. Particularly the moſt elevated ſenſation of muſic ariſes from a confuſed perception of ideal or viſionary beauty and rapture, which is ſufficiently perceivable to fire the imagination, but not clear enough to become an object of knowledge. This ſhadowy beauty the mind attempts, with a languiſhing curioſity, to collect into a diſtinct object of view and comprehenſion; but it ſinks and eſcapes, like the diſſolving ideas of a delightful dream, that are neither within the reach of the memory, nor yet totally fled. The nobleſt charm of muſic then, though real and affecting, ſeems too confuſed and fluid to be collected into a diſtinct idea. Harmony is always underſtood by the croud, and almoſt always miſtaken by muſicians, who are, with hardly any ex-

ception, ſervile followers of the taſte of mode, and who having expended much time and pains on the mechanic and practical part, lay a ſtreſs on the dexterities of hand, which yet have no real value, but as they ſerve to produce thoſe collections of ſound that move the paſſions. The preſent Italian taſte for muſic is exactly correſpondent to the taſte of tragi-comedy, that about a century ago gained ground upon the ſtage. The muſicians of the preſent day are charmed at the union they form between the grave and the fantaſtic, and at the ſurpriſing tranſitions they make between extremes, while every hearer who has the leaſt remainder of the taſte of nature left, is ſhocked at the ſtrange jargon. If the ſame taſte ſhould prevail in painting, we muſt ſoon expect to ſee the woman's head, a horſe's body, and a fiſh's tail, united by ſoft gradations, greatly admired at our public exhibitions. Muſical gentlemen ſhould take

take particular care to preſerve in its full vigour and ſenſibility their original natural taſte, which alone feels and diſcovers the true beauty of muſic.

If Milton, Shakeſpeare, or Dryden, had been born with the ſame genius and inſpiration for muſic as for poetry, and had paſſed through the practical part without corrupting the natural taſte, or blending with it a prepoſſeſſion in favour of the ſlights and dexterities of hand, then would their notes be tuned to paſſions and to ſentiments as natural and expreſſive as the tones and modulations of the voice in diſcourſe. The muſic and the thought would not make different impreſſions: the hearers would only think impetuouſly; and the effect of the muſic would be to give the ideas a tumultuous violence and divine impulſe upon the mind. Any perſon converſant with the claſſic poets, ſees inſtantly that the paſſionate power of

of muſic I ſpeak of, was perfectly underſtood and practiſed by the ancients; that the muſes of the Greeks always ſung, and their ſong was the echo of the ſubject, which ſwelled their poetry into enthuſiaſm and rapture. An enquiry into the nature and merits of the ancient muſic, and a compariſon thereof with modern compoſition, by a perſon of poetic genius and an admirer of harmony, who is free from the ſhackles of practice, and the prejudices of the mode, aided by the countenance of a few men of rank, of elevated and true taſte, would probably lay the preſent half-Gothic mode of muſic in ruins, like thoſe towers of whoſe little laboured ornaments it is an exact picture, and reſtore the Grecian taſte of paſſionate harmony once more, to the delight and wonder of mankind. But as from the diſpoſition of things, and the force of faſhion, we cannot hope in our time to reſcue the ſacred lyre, and ſee it

put

put into the hands of men of genius, I can only recall you to your own natural feeling of harmony, and obſerve to you, that its emotions are not found in the laboured, fantaſtic, and ſurpriſing compoſitions that form the modern ſtyle of muſic; but you meet them in ſome few pieces that are the growth of wild unvitiated taſte; you diſcover them in the ſwelling ſounds that wrap us in imaginary grandeur; in whoſe plaintive notes that make us in love with woe; in the tones that utter the lover's ſighs, and fluctuate the breaſt with gentle pain; in the noble ſtrokes that coil up the courage and fury of the ſoul, or that lull it in confuſed viſions of joy: in ſhort, in thoſe affecting ſtrains that find their way to the inward receſſes of the heart;

Untwiſting all the chains that tie
The hidden ſoul of harmony.

MILTON.

Sculpture

Sculpture and painting have their ſtandard in nature; and their principles differ only according to the different materials made uſe of in theſe arts. The variety of his colours, and the flat ſurface on which the painter is at liberty to raiſe his magic objects, give him a vaſt ſcope of ornament, variety, harmony of parts, and oppoſition, to pleaſe the mind, and divert it from too ſtrict an examination. The ſculptor, being ſo much confined, has nothing to move with but beauty, paſſion, and force of attitude; Sculpture therefore admits of no mediocrity; its works are either intolerable, or very fine. In Greece, the finiſhing of a ſingle ſtatue was often the work of many years.

Sculpture and painting take their merit from the ſame ſpirit that poetry does; a juſtneſs, a grandeur, and force of expreſſion: and their principal objects

are

are the ſublime, the beautiful, and the paſſionate. Painting, on account of its great latitude, approaches alſo very near to the variety of poetry; in general their principles vary only according to the different materials of each.

Poetry is capable of taking a ſeries of ſucceſſive facts, which comprehend a whole action from the beginning. It puts the paſſions in motion gradually, and winds them up by ſucceſſive efforts, that all conduce to the intended effect; the mind could never be agitated ſo violently, if the ſtorm had not come on by degrees: beſides, language by its capacity of repreſenting thoughts, of forming the communication of mind with mind, and deſcribing emotions, takes in ſeveral great, awful, and paſſionate ideas that colours cannot repreſent; but the painter is confined to objects of viſion, and to one point or inſtant of time: he cannot bring

bring into view any events which did not, or at leaſt might not happen, at one and the ſame inſtant. The chief art of the hiſtory painter, is to hit upon a point of time, that unites the whole ſucceſſive action in one view, and ſtrikes out the emotion you are deſirous of raiſing. Some painters have had the power of preſerving the traces of a receding paſſion, or the mixed diſturbed emotions of the mind, without impairing the principal paſſion. The Medea of Timomachus was a miracle of this kind; her wild love, her rage, and her maternal pity, were all poured forth to the eye, in one portrait. From this mixture of paſſions, which is in nature, the murdreſs appeared dreadfully affecting.

It is very neceſſary for the union of deſign in painting, that one principal figure appear eminently in view, and that all the reſt be ſubordinate to it; that is, the

the paſſion or attention of that principal object ſhould give a caſt to the whole piece: for inſtance, if it be a wreſtler, or a courſer in the race, the whole ſcene ſhould not only be active, but the attentions and paſſions of the reſt of the figures ſhould all be directed by that object: if it be a fiſherman over the ſtream, the whole ſcene muſt be ſilent, and meditative; if ruins, a bridge, or waterfall, even the living perſons muſt be ſubordinate, and the traveller ſhould gaze or look back with wonder. The ſtrict union and concord is rather more neceſſary in painting than in poetry: the reaſon is, painting is almoſt palpably a deception, and requires the utmoſt ſkill in ſelecting a vicinity of probable ideas, to give it the air of reality and nature. For this reaſon alſo nothing ſtrange, wonderful, or ſhocking to credulity, ought to be admitted in paintings that are deſigned after real life.

The

The principal art of the landſcape painter lies in ſelecting thoſe objects of view that are beautiful or great, providing there be a propriety and a juſt neighbourhood preſerved in the aſſemblage, along with a careleſs diſtribution that ſolicits your eye to the principal object where it reſts; in giving ſuch a glance or confuſed view of thoſe that retire out of proſpect, as to raiſe curioſity, and create in the imagination affecting ideas that do not appear; and in beſtowing as much life and action as poſſible, without overcharging the piece. A landſcape is enlivened by putting the animated figures into action; by flinging over it the chearful aſpect which the ſun beſtows, either by a proper diſpoſition of ſhade, or by the appearances that beautify his riſing or ſetting; and by a judicious proſpect of water, which always conveys the idea of motion: a few diſhevelled clouds have the

ſame

ſame effect, but with ſomewhat leſs vivacity.

The excellence of portrait painting and ſculpture ſpring from the ſame principles that affect us in life; they are not the perſons who perform in a comedy or tragedy we go to ſee with ſo much pleaſure, but the paſſions and emotions they diſplay: in like manner, the value of ſtatues and pictures riſe in proportion to the ſtrength and cleanneſs of the expreſſion of the paſſions; and ſo the peculiar and diſtinguiſhing air of character. Great painters almoſt always chuſe a fine face to exhibit the paſſions in. If you recollect what I ſaid on beauty, you will eaſily conceive the reaſon why the agreeable paſſions are moſt lively in a beautiful face; beauty is the natural vehicle of the agreeable paſſions. For the ſame reaſon the tempeſtuous paſſions appear ſtrongeſt in a fine face; it ſuffers the moſt violent derangement

by them. To which we may add, upon the ſame principle, that dignity or courage cannot be mixed in a very ill favoured countenance; and that the painter, after exerting his whole ſkill, finds in their ſtead pride and terror. Theſe obſervations, which have been often made, ſerve to illuſtrate our thoughts on beauty. Beſides the ſtrict propriety of nature, ſculpture and figure-painting is a kind of deſcription, which, like poetry, is under the direction of genius; that, while it preſerves nature, ſometimes, in a fine flight of fancy, throws an ideal ſplendor over the figures that never exiſted in real life. Such is the ſublime and celeſtial character that breathes over the Apollo Belvedere, and the inexpreſſible beauties that dwell upon the Venus of Medici, and ſeem to ſhed an illumination around her. This ſuperior beauty muſt be varied with propriety, as well as the paſſions; the elegance of Juno muſt be decent, lofty, and

elated;

elated; of Minerva, maſculine, confident, and chaſte; and of Venus, winning, ſoft, and conſcious of pleaſing. Theſe ſiſter arts, painting and ſtatuary, as well as poetry, put it out of all doubt, that the imagination carries the ideas of the beautiful and the ſublime far beyond viſible nature; ſince no mortal ever poſſeſſed the blaze of divine charms that ſurrounds the Apollo Belvedere, or the Venus of Medici, I have juſt mentioned.

A variety and flush of colouring is generally the refuge of painters, who are not able to animate their deſigns. We may call a luſtre of colouring, the rant and fuſtain of painting, under which are hid the want of ſtrength and nature. None but a painter of real genius can be ſevere and modeſt in his colouring, and pleaſe at the ſame time. It muſt be obſerved, that the glow and variety of colours, give a

pleaſure of a very different kind from the object of painting. When foreign ornaments, gilding, and carving come to be conſidered as neceſſary to the beauty of pictures, they are a plain diagnoſtic of a decay in taſte and power.

Chap.

chitecture.

A free and eaſy proportion united with ſimplicity, ſeem to conſtitute the elegance of form in building. A ſubordination of parts to one evident deſign forms ſimplicity; when the members thus evidently related are great, the union is always very great. In the proportions of a noble edifice, you ſee the image of a creating mind reſult from the whole. The evident uniformity of the rotunda, and its unparalleled ſimplicity, are probably the ſources of its ſuperior beauty. When we look up at the vaulted roof, that ſeems to reſt upon our horizon, we are aſtoniſhed at the magnificence, more than at the viſible extent.

When

When I am taking a review of the objects of beauty and grandeur, can I paſs by unnoticed the ſource of colours and viſible beauty? When the light is withdrawn, all nature retires from view, viſible bodies are annihilated, and the ſoul mourns the univerſal abſence in ſolitude; when it returns, it brings along with it the creation, and reſtores joy as well as beauty.

If I ſhould diſtinguiſh the perceptions of the ſenſes from each other, according to the ſtrength of the traces left on the imagination, I ſhould call thoſe of hearing, feeling, ſmelling, and taſting, *notions*, which impreſs the memory but weakly; while thoſe of colours I ſhould call ideas, to denote their ſtrength and peculiar clearneſs upon the imagination. This diſtinction deſerves particular notice. The Author of nature has drawn an impenetrable veil over the fixed material world

that ſurrounds us: ſolid matter refuſes our acquaintance, and will be known to us only by reſiſting the touch; but how obſcure are the informations of feeling! light comes like an intimate acquaintance to relieve us; it introduces all nature to us, the fields, the trees, the flowers, the cryſtal ſtreams, and azure ſky. But all this beauteous diverſity is no more than an agreeable enchantment formed by the light that ſpreads itſelf to view; the fixed parts of nature are eternally entombed beneath the light, and we ſee nothing in fact but a creation of colours. Schoolmen, with their uſual arrogance, will tell you their ideas are tranſcripts of nature, and aſſure you that the veracity of God requires they ſhould be ſo, becauſe we cannot well avoid thinking ſo; but nothing is an object of viſion but light, the picture we ſee is not annexed to the earth, but comes with angelic celerity to meet our eyes. That which is called

body

body or ſubſtance, that reflects the various colours of the light, and lies hid beneath the appearance, is wrapt in impenetrable obſcurity; it is fatally ſhut out from our eyes and imagination, and only cauſes in us the ideas of feeling, taſting, or ſmelling, which yet are not reſemblances of any part of matter. I do not know if I appear too ſtrong when I call colours the expreſſion of the Divinity. Light ſtrikes us with ſuch vivacity and force, that we can hardly call it inanimate or unintelligent.

Shall we admit uniformity into our liſt of beauty, or firſt examine its real merits? When we look into the works of nature, we cannot avoid obſerving that uniformity is but the beauty of minute objects. The oppoſite ſides of a leaf divided in the middle, and the leaves of the ſame ſpecies of vegetables, retain a ſtriking uniformity; but the branch, the tree, and foreſt deſert this ſimilarity, and take

a noble irregularity with vaſt advantage. Cut a tree into a regular form, and you change its lofty port for a minute prettineſs. What forms the beauty of country ſcenes, but the want of uniformity? No two hills, vales, rivers, or proſpects, are alike; and you are charmed by the variety. Let us now ſuppoſe a country made up of the moſt beautiful hills and deſcents imaginable, but every hill and every vale alike, and at an equal diſtance; they ſoon tire you, and you find the delight vaniſhes with the novelty.

Beauty

There are, I own, certain aſſemblages that form a powerful beauty by their union, of which a fine face is inconteſtible evidence. But the charm does not ſeem by any means to reſide in the uniformity, which in the human countenance is not very exact. The human countenance may be planned out much more regu-

regularly, but I fancy without adding to the beauty, for which we muſt ſeek another ſource. In truth, the fineſt eye in the world without meaning, and the fineſt mouth without a ſmile, are inſipid. An agreeable countenance includes in the idea thereof an agreeable and gentle diſpoſition. How the countenance, and an arrangement of colours and features, can expreſs the idea of an unſeen mind, we know not; but ſo the fact is, and to this fine intelligent picture, whether it be falſe or true, certain I am, that the beauty of the human countenance is owing, more than to uniformity. Shall we then ſay, that the greateſt uniformity, along with the greateſt variety, forms beauty? But this is a repetition of words without diſtinct ideas, and explicates a well-known effect, by an obſcure cauſe. Uniformity, as far as it extends, excludes variety; and variety, ſo far as it reaches, excludes uniformity. Variety is by far

more

more pleaſing than uniformity, but it does not conſtitute beauty; for it is impoſſible that can be called beauty, which, when well known, ceaſes to pleaſe; whereas a fine piece of muſic ſhall charm after being heard a hundred times; and a lovely countenance makes a ſtronger impreſſion on the mind by being often ſeen, becauſe there, beauty is real. I think we may, upon the whole, conclude, that if uniformity be a beauty, it is but the beauty of minute objects; and that it pleaſes only by the viſible deſign, and the evident footſteps of intelligence it diſcovers.

I muſt ſay ſomething of the evaneſcent charms of novelty. When our curioſity is excited at the opening of new ſcenes, our ideas are affecting and beyond life, and we ſee objects in a brighter hue than they after appear in. For when curioſity is ſated, the objects grow dull, and our

our ideas fall to their diminutive natural size. What I have said may account for the raptured prospect of our youth we see backward; novelty always recommends, because expectations of the unknown are ever high; and in youth we have an eternal novelty: unexperienced credulous youth gilds our young ideas, and ever meets a fresh lustre that is not yet allayed by doubts. In age, experience corrects our hopes, and the imagination cools; for this reason, wisdom and high pleasure do not reside together.

I have observed through this discourse, that the delight we receive from the visible objects of nature, or from the fine arts, may be divided into the conceptions of the sublime, and conceptions of the beautiful. Of the origin of the sublime I spoke hypothetically, and with diffidence; all we certainly know on this head is, that

wisdom reduces every thing to proper size & standard — & does us to raise our expectation

that the ſenſations of the ſublime we receive from external objects, are attended with obſcure ideas of power and immenſity; the origin of our ſenſations of beauty, are ſtill more unintelligible: however, I think there is ſome foundation for claſſing the objects of beauty under different heads, by a correſpondence or ſimilarity, that may be obſerved between ſeveral particulars.

A full and conſiſtent evidence of deſign, eſpecially if the deſign be attended with an important effect, gives the idea of beauty: thus a ſhip under ſail, a grey-hound, a well-ſhaped horſe, are beautiful, becauſe they diſplay with eaſe a great deſign. Birds and beaſts of prey, compleatly armed for deſtruction, are for the ſame reaſon beautiful, although objects of terror.

Where

Where different deſigns, at a ſingle view, appear to concur to one effect, the beauty accumulates; as in the Grecian architecture: where different deſigns, leading to different effects, unite in the ſame whole, they cauſe confuſion, and diminiſh the idea of beauty, as in the Gothic buildings. Upon the ſame principle, confuſion and diſorder are ugly or frightful; the figures made by ſpilled liquors are always ugly. Regular figures are handſome; and the circular, the moſt regular, is the moſt beautiful. This regulation holds only where the ſublime does not enter; for in that caſe the irregularity and careleſſneſs adds to the ideas of power, and raiſes in proportion our admiration. The confuſion in which we ſee the ſtars ſcattered over the heavens, and the rude arrangement of mountains, add to their grandeur.

A mixture of the ſublime aids exceedingly the idea of beauty, and height-

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ens the horrors of diſorder and uglineſs. Perſonal beauty is vaſtly raiſed by a noble air; on the contrary, the diſſolution and ruins of a large city, diſtreſſes the mind proportionally: but while we mourn over great ruins, at the deſtruction of our ſpecies, we are alſo ſoothed by the generous commiſeration we feel in our own breaſts, and therefore ruins give us the ſame kind of grateful melancholly we feel at a tragedy. Of all the objects of diſcord and confuſion, no other is ſo ſhocking as the human ſoul in madneſs. When we ſee the principle of thought and beauty diſordered, the horror is too high, like that of a maſſacre committed before our eyes, to ſuffer the mind to make any reflex act on the god-like traces of pity that diſtinguiſh our ſpecies; and we feel no ſenſations but thoſe of diſmay and terror.

Regular motion and life ſhewn in inanimate objects, give us alſo the ſecret plea-

ſure

ſure we call beauty. Thus waves ſpent, and ſucceſſively breaking upon the ſhore, and waving fields of corn or graſs in continued motion, are ever beautiful. The beauty of colours may perhaps be arranged under this head: colours, like notes of muſic, affect the paſſions; red incites anger; black to melancholy; white brings a gentle joy to mind; the ſofter colours refreſh or relax it. The mixtures and gradations of colours have an effect correſpondent to the tranſitions and combinations of ſounds; but the ſtrokes are too tranſient and feeble to become the objects of expreſſion.

Beauty alſo reſults from every diſpoſition of nature that plainly diſcovers her favour and indulgence to us. Thus the ſpring ſeaſon, when the weather becomes mild, the verdant fields, trees loaded with fruit or covered with ſhade, clear ſprings, but particularly the human face, where the gentle

gentle paſſions are delineated, is beyond expreſſion beautiful. On the ſame principle, inclement wintry ſkies, trees ſtripped of their verdure, deſert barren lands, and above all death, is frightful and ſhocking. I muſt however, obſerve, that I do not by any means ſuppoſe, that the ſentiment of beauty ariſes from a reflex conſiderate act of mind, upon the obſervation or the deſign of nature or of art; the ſentiment of beauty is inſtantaneous, and depends on no prior reflections. All I mean is, that deſign and beauty are in an arbitrary manner united together; ſo that where we ſee the one, whether we reflect on it or no, we perceive the other. I muſt further add, that there may be other diviſions of beauty eaſily diſcoverable, which I have not taken notice of.

The general ſenſe of beauty, as well as of grandeur, ſeems peculiar to man in

the creation. The herd in common with him enjoy the gentle breath of spring; they lye down to repose on the flowery bank, and hear the peaceful humming of the bee; they enjoy the green fields and pastures: but we have reason to think, that it is man only who sees the image of beauty over the happy prospect, and rejoices at it; that it is hid from the brute creation, and depends not upon sense, but on the intelligent mind.

We have just taken a transient view of the principal departments of taste; let us now, madam, make a few general reflections upon our subject.

The human genius, with the best assistance, and the finest examples, breaks forth but slowly; and the greatest men have but gradually, acquired, a just taste, and chaste simple conceptions of beauty. At an immature age, the sense of beauty

is weak, and confuſed, and requires an exceſs of colouring to catch its attention. It then prefers extravagance and rant to juſtneſs, a groſs falſe wit to the engaging light of nature, and the ſhewy, rich, and glaring, to the fine and amiable. This is the childhood of taſte; but as the human genius ſtrengthens and grows to maturity, if it be aſſiſted by a happy education, the ſenſe of univerſal beauty awakes; it begins to be diſguſted with the falſe and miſhapen deceptions that pleaſed before, and reſts with delight on elegant ſimplicity, on pictures of eaſy beauty, and unaffected grandeur.

The progreſs of the fine arts in the human mind, may be fixed at three remarkable degrees, from their foundation to the loftieſt height. The baſis is a ſenſe of beauty and of the ſublime, the ſecond ſtep we may call taſte, and the laſt genius.

A ſenſe

A ſenſe of the beautiful and of the great is univerſal, which appears from the uniformity thereof in the moſt diſtant ages and nations. What was engaging and ſublime in antient Greece and Rome, are ſo at this day: and, as I obſerved before, there is not the leaſt neceſſity of improvement or ſcience, to diſcover the charms of a graceful or noble deportment. Here is a fine, but an ineffectual light in the breaſt of man. After nightfall we have admired the planet Venus, the beauty and vivacity of her luſtre, the immenſe diſtance from which we judged her beams iſſued, and the ſilence of the night, all concurred to ſtrike us with an agreeable amazement. But ſhe ſhone in diſtinguiſhed beauty, without giving ſufficient light to direct our ſteps, or ſhew us the objects around us. Thus in unimproved nature, the light of the mind is bright and uſeleſs. In utter barbarity, our proſpect of it is ſtill leſs fixed; it ap-

pears, and then again ſeems wholly to vaniſh in the ſavage breaſt; like the ſame planet Venus, when ſhe has but juſt raiſed her orient beams to mariners above the waves, and is now deſcried, and now loſt, through the ſwelling billows.

The next ſtep is taſte, the ſubject of our enquiry, which conſiſts in a diſtinct, unconfuſed knowledge of the great and beautiful. Although you ſee not many poſſeſſed of a good taſte, yet the generality of mankind are capable of it. The very populace of Athens had acquired a good taſte by habit and fine example, ſo that a delicacy of judgment ſeemed natural to all who breathed the air of that elegant city: we find a manly and elevated ſenſe diſtinguiſh the common people of Rome and of all the cities of Greece, while the level of mankind was preſerved in thoſe cities; while the Plebeians had a ſhare in the government, and an utter ſeparation was-

was not made between them and the nobles, by wealth and luxury. But when once the common people are rent aſunder wholly from the great and opulent, and made ſubſervient to the luxury of the latter; then the taſte of nature infallibly takes her flight from both parties. The poor by a ſordid habit, and an attention wholly confined to mean views, and the rich by an attention to the changeable modes of fancy, and a vitiated preference for the rich and coſtly, loſe view of ſimple beauty and grandeur. It may ſeem a paradox, and yet I am firmly perſuaded, that it would be eaſier at this day to give a good taſte to the young ſavages of America, than to the noble youth of Europe.

Genius, the pride of man, as man is of the creation, has been poſſeſſed but by few, even in the brighteſt ages. Men of ſuperior genius, while they ſee the

reſt of mankind painfully ſtruggling to comprehend obvious truths, glance themſelves through the moſt remote conſequences, like lightning through a path that cannot be traced. They ſee the beauties of nature with life and warmth, and paint them forcibly without effort, as the morning ſun does the ſcenes he riſes upon; and in ſeveral inſtances, communicate to objects a morning freſhneſs and unaccountable luſtre, that is not ſeen in the creation of nature. The poet, the ſtatuary, the painter, have produced images that left nature far behind.

The conſtellations of extraordinary perſonages who appeared in Greece and Rome, or near at the ſame period of time, after ages of darkneſs to which we know no beginning; and the long barrenneſs of thoſe countries after in great men, prove that genius owes much of its luſtre to a perſonal conteſt of glory, and

and the ſtrong rivalſhip of great examples within actual view and knowledge; and that great parts alone are not able to lift a perſon out of barbarity. It is further to be obſerved, that when the inſpiring ſpirit of the fine arts retired, and left inanimate and cold the breaſts of poets, painters, and ſtatuaries, men of taſte ſtill remained, who diſtinguiſhed and admired the beauteous monuments of genius; but the power of execution was loſt; and although monarchs loved and courted the arts, yet they refuſed to return. From whence it is evident, that neither taſte, nor natural parts, form the creating genius that inſpired the great maſters of antiquity, and that they owed their extraordinary powers to ſomething different from both.

If we conſider the numbers of men who wrote well, and excelled in every department of the liberal arts, in the ages of genius, and the ſimplicity that always

attends beauty; we muſt be led to think, that although few perhaps can reach to the ſupreme beauty of imagination diſplayed by the firſt-rate poets, orators, and philoſophers; yet moſt men are capable of juſt thinking and agreeable writing. Nature lies very near our reflections, and will appear, if we be not miſled and prejudiced before the ſenſe of beauty grows to maturity. The populace of Athens and Rome prove ſtrongly, that uncommon parts or great learning are not neceſſary to make men think juſtly.

We know not the bounds of taſte, becauſe we are unacquainted with the extent and boundaries of the human genius. The mind in ignorance is like a ſleeping giant: it has immenſe capacities, without the power of uſing them. By liſtening to the leſſons of Socrates, men grew heroes, philoſophers, and legiſlators; for he, of all mankind, ſeemed to have diſcovered the

the ſhort and lightſome path to the faculties of the mind. To give you an inſtance of the human capacity, that comes more immediately within your notice, what graces, what ſentiments have been tranſplanted into the motion of a minuet, which a ſavage has no conception of! We know not to what degree of rapture harmony is capable of being carried, nor what hidden powers may be in yet unexperienced beauties of the imagination, whoſe objects are in ſcenes and in worlds we are ſtrangers to. Children who die young, have no conception of the ſentiment of perſonal beauty. Are we certain that we are not yet children in reſpect to ſeveral ſpecies of beauties? We are ignorant whether there be not paſſions in the ſoul, that have hitherto remained unawaked and undiſcovered for want of objects to rouſe them: we feel plainly, that ſome ſuch are gently agitated and moved by certain notes of muſic. In reality,

reality, we know not but the taſte and capacity of beauty and grandeur in the ſoul, may extend as far beyond all we actually perceive, as this whole world exceeds the ſphere of a cockle or an oyſter.

Let us now conſider by what means taſte is uſually depraved and loſt in a nation, that is neither conquered by barbarians nor has loſt the improvements in agriculture, huſbandry, and defence, that allow men leiſure for reflection and embelliſhment. I obſerved before, that this natural light is not ſo clear in the greateſt men, but it may lie oppreſſed by barbarity. When people of mean parts, and of pride without genius, get into elevated ſtations, they want a taſte for ſimple grandeur, and miſtake for it what is uncommonly glaring and extraordinary; whence proceeds falſe wit of every kind, a gaudy richneſs in dreſs, an oppreſſive load of ornament in building, and a

grandeur

grandeur overſtrained and puerile univerſally. I muſt obſerve, that people of bad taſte and little genius almoſt always lay a great ſtreſs on trivial matters, and are oſtentatious and exact in ſingularities, or in a decorum in trifles. When people of mean parts appear in high ſtations, and at the head of the faſhionable world, they cannot fail to introduce a falſe embroidered habit of mind: people of nearly the ſame genius who make up the crowd, will admire and follow them; and at length ſolitary taſte, adorned only by noble ſimplicity, will be loſt in the general example, which is pretty near the Case now. —

Alſo when a nation is much corrupted; when avarice and a love of gain have ſeized upon the hearts of men; when the nobles ignominiouſly bend their necks to corruption and bribery, or enter into the baſe myſteries of gaming; then decency, elevated principles, and greatneſs of ſoul expire;

expire; and all that remains is a comedy or puppet-ſhew of elegance, in which the dancing-maſter and peer are upon a level, and the mind is underſtood to have no part in the drama of politeneſs, or elſe to act under a mean diſguiſe of virtues which it is not poſſeſſed of.

(Concluſion.)

Upon putting together the whole of our reflections, you ſee two different natures laying claim to the human race, and dragging it different ways. You ſee a neceſſity that ariſes from our ſituation and circumſtances, bending us down into unworthy miſery and ſordid baſeneſs; and you ſee, when we can eſcape from the inſulting tyranny of our fate, and acquire eaſe and freedom, a generous nature that lay ſtupified and oppreſſed, begin to awake and charm us with proſpects of beauty and glory. This awaking genius gazes in rapture at the beauteous and elevating ſcenes of nature. The beauties of nature are familiar, and charm it like a

mother's boſom; and the objects which have the plain marks of immenſe power and grandeur, raiſe in it a ſtill, an inquiſitive, and trembling delight: but genius often throws over the objects of its conceptions colours finer than thoſe of nature, and opens a Paradiſe that exiſts no where but in its own creations. The bright and peaceful ſcenes of Arcadia, and the lovely deſcriptions of paſtoral poetry, never exiſted on earth, no more than Pope's ſhepherds or the river gods of Windſor foreſt: it is all but a charming illuſion, which the mind firſt paints with celeſtial colours, and then languiſhes for. Knight-errantry is another kind of deluſion, which though it be fictitious in fact, yet is true in ſentiment. I believe there are few people who in their youth, before they be corrupted by the commerce of the world, are not knight-errants and princeſſes in their hearts. The ſoul, in a beauteous ecſtacy, communicates

municates a flame to words which they had not; and poetry, by its quick tranſitions, bold figures, lively images, and the variety of efforts to paint the latent rapture, bears witneſs, that the confuſed ideas of the mind are ſtill infinitely ſuperior, and beyond the reach of all deſcription. It is this divine ſpirit that, when rouſed from its lethargy, breathes in noble ſentiments, that charms in elegance, that ſtamps upon marble or canvas the figures of gods and heroes, that inſpires them with an air above humanity, and leads the ſoul through the enchanting meanders of muſic in a awking viſion, through which it cannot break to diſcover the near objects that charm it.

How ſhall we venture to trace the object of this ſurpriſing beauty peculiar to genius, which evidently does not come to the mind from the ſenſes: it is not conveyed in ſound, for we feel the ſounds

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of muſic charm us by gently agitating and ſwelling the paſſions, and ſetting ſome paſſions afloat, for which we have no name, and knew not until they were awaked in the mind by harmony. This beauty does not arrive at the mind by the ideas of viſion, though it be moved by them; for it evidently beſtows on the mimic repreſentations and images the mind makes of the objects of ſenſe, an enchanting lovelineſs that never exiſted in thoſe objects. Where ſhall the ſoul find this amazing beauty, whoſe very ſhadow, glimmering upon the imagination, opens unſpeakable raptures in it, and diſtracts it with languiſhing pleaſure? What are thoſe ſtranger ſentiments that lie in wait in the ſoul, until muſic calls them forth? What is the obſcure but unavoidable value or merit of virtue? or who is the law-maker in the mind who gives it a worth and dignity beyond all eſtimation, and puniſhes the breach of

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it with conſcious terror and deſpair? What is it in objects of our immeaſurable power and grandeur, that we look for with ſtill amazement and awful delight? But I find, madam, we have been inſenſibly led into ſubjects too abſtruſe and ſevere; I muſt not put the graces with whom we have been converſing to flight, and draw the ſerious air of meditation over that countenance where the ſmiles naturally dwell.

I have, in conſequence of your permiſſion, put together ſuch thoughts as occurred to me on good taſte. I told you, if I had leiſure hereafter, I would diſpoſe of them with more regularity, and add any new obſervation that I may make. Before I finiſh, I muſt in juſtice make my acknowledgements of the aſſiſtance I received. I took notice at the beginning, that Rollin's Obſervations on taſte gave occaſion to this diſcourſe. Sir Harry Beaumont's

poliſhed

poliſhed dialogue on beauty, called Crito, was of ſervice to me; and I have availed myſelf of the writings and ſentiments of the ancients, particularly of the poets and ſtatuaries of Greece, which was the native and original country of the graces and fine arts. But I ſhould be very unjuſt, if I did not make my chief acknowledgments where they are more peculiarly due. If your modeſty will not ſuffer me to draw that picture from which I borrowed my ideas of elegance, I am bound, at leaſt in honeſty, to diſclaim every merit but that of copying from a bright original.

A DISCOURSE on TASTE,

Continued in a DIALOGUE between a young Lady and the Dean of ——.

Amelia. I AM pleaſed with the familiarity of your friend's Clio, and I am pleaſed at the ſubject. I always took learning to be harſh and unſociable, but nothing can be more agreeable than the fine arts. Dear muſic! painting! ſtatuary! architecture! elegance! I am in love with them all. Why is our taſte for them ſo different from our taſte for the other parts of learning.

Dean. Modern philoſophers, madam, leave the human mind to the poets, as a thing of too much levity to deſerve attention, and pay their chief regards to ſober ſolid matter, or the ſubſtance of which

which bodies are formed. They will teach you its laws, and how to compute, with ſcrupulous exactneſs, the forces of bodies in motion. They nicely weigh the arguments *pro* and *con* about the diviſibility of matter, and then leave them in the balances. They meaſure and compare figures, which is of vaſt uſe in the concerns of life: but they have greater effects in view; no leſs than the conſtruction of worlds, and the furniſhing them afterwards. They ingeniouſly attribute ſeveral powers to the form, to the motion, and ſize of the inviſible particles of bodies, which were never known to reſide in viſible form, motion, or ſize. For inſtance, they tell you that the ſame ſubſtance or matter, being in the form of minute ſpheres or globes, conſtitutes water; but being exhibited in the form of ſquares, pyramids, and other figures, of proper ſizes, it makes trees, rocks, animals, and the other furniture of this

world. Having taken a licence of beſtowing a metamorphoſing or productive power on unknown forms and ſizes, where they are confident they cannot be detected, they ſit you out a world with its cargo, with as little difficulty as they would a ſhip for the Eaſt Indies; and are ready to furniſh you but as many more as there is occaſion for, throughout the expanſe of the heavens. It is even a caſe of doubt, whether matter may not think. But as the graveſt philoſophers have modeſtly acknowledged, that thought muſt in that caſe be impreſſed by the arbitrary volition of the deity on matter, we ſhall never be able to determine, whether in a world conſtituted ſomewhat differently from this, the trees are not animated, and the flowers are not little gay coquets.

A. I ſhould like much to be acquainted with your little gaudy coquets, if they were not ſubject to die ſo ſoon on

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my hands. As for the reſt of what you have been ſaying, I underſtand little of it. Your philoſophers have already tired me; let us leave them at work in their matter, I would not for the world diſturb them, for I ſee they are buſy about affairs of great conſequence. What I want to know is, why the fine arts are ſo familiar and pleaſing.

D. You ſee that the kind of learning I have been ſpeaking of, bears little relation to man: therefore providentially it has few natural charms for him. The truth is, the world is a ſcene thro' which his fate obliges him to haſten; its matter and creation are of little conſequence to him, otherwiſe than affording him a paſſage between birth and death; in a few years they will be of no manner of concern to him. In proportion to this worthleſſneſs, provident nature has wrapped them in obſcurity. When he em-

ploys his thoughts about matter, it retires from him ſullenly into darkneſs, and his philoſophy becomes trifling, cold, and barren: but when you look towards the fine arts, you ſee that they all bear a manifeſt relation to the ſoul or ſpirit, that forms *ourſelves* throughout our whole exiſtence. Hiſtory, tragedy, comedy, and every ſpecies of poetry, are either repreſentations of the human paſſions, or of the ideas that move them. Painting, ſculpture, the various beauties of viſion, muſic, and that noble part of philoſophy, which treats of human nature, all take their value from their relation to the ſoul.

A. If I underſtand you right, you are of opinion, that it is ſome proſpect exhibited of the mind itſelf, or of the paſſions, that make hiſtory, tragedy, comedy, and the other ſpecies of poetry delightful; and that the ſtudies that have not the

the mind immediately in view, are cold and tasteless.

D. You conceive my meaning very exactly. Euclid and Sir Isaac Newton were men of prodigious knowledge and invention; every lover of science studies them carefully, and is obliged to admire the clearness and extent of genius they displayed; but their works are cold and inanimate; to read them requires patience, and to comprehend them uncommon labour, and painful perseverance: they convince our reason, but touch not the heart. If you like to feast on the ideas that naturally charm us, look at the simple conceptions of the human mind in Shakespeare, or the sublime of Milton. It is in vain to plead in behalf of Euclid and Sir Isaac Newton, that improvements beyond measure useful in the concerns of life, depend on their discoveries. Taste is not convinced by argument, nor bribed by

by uſe or conveniency. It paſſes by the inventors of uſeful arts with negligence, and admires with a lover's warmth the poet, the ſtatuary, and painter, and their idle arts. Let me add, that the ſcholars of Socrates, (who much confined their enquiries to the human mind) ſeemed to have acquired powers ſuperior to the reſt of mankind, and to diſplay a pomp of genius that never appeared before or ſince; which is a ſtrong teſtimony of the richneſs of this vein of ſcience, and of the kindneſs of the author of our prepoſſeſſions, who has invited us by pleaſure and advantage to turn our thoughts to the intellectual part of man.

A. I am glad Socrates, whom you admire ſo much, was of my taſte; and I ſhall have a great eſteem for him from henceforward. You have given me a new light into the connection obſervable between the fine arts. They are all united by

by the human mind, to which they are mutually related. But how came it to paſs that the fine arts lay dead ſo long in barbarity?

D. My friend told you in Clio—when the life of man was ſhortened, and his wants encreaſed by the barrenneſs of the earth; when half his life was caſt into helpleſs youth, or declining age; and cold, hunger, and wild beaſts perſecuted him, he was inevitably obliged to turn all his attention to his neceſſities, and to neglect all thoughts of arts and elegance, conſequently to fall into barbariſm.

A. That I comprehend very clearly; but after the human ſtate was improved, and men had leiſure to think, when the arts came to be known, admired, and cultivated, how came their reign to be ſo ſhort? What was the reaſon that they forſook nations that loved them, and were cap-

captivated with their charms; and that although courted, they obſtinately refuſed to return?

D. There is ſomething equally unaccountable in their firſt viſit to the world. In Greece, and Greece only, the fine arts ſprung up, unlooked for, and unknown, to a ſtate of perfection, and to a ſtate of perfection beyond all emulation. Tragedy, comedy, hiſtory, philoſophy, ſculpture, painting, and muſic, like the Graces, appeared hand in hand. And in the Grecian writers, you frequently diſcover manifeſt traces of the grand genius that inſpired them. But the wonder of their appearance was not greater, than that of their receſs. But great men in thoſe arts in Greece, lay within ſo narrow a compaſs, that they might nearly be acquainted with each other. But when that noble age paſſed by, the arts began to languiſh, and never

after recovered their luſtre. Exactly the ſame revolutions happened in Rome: the genius of taſte ſeemed to viſit the world once more, and to take her reſidence in the capital of the world. She ſtaid about eighty years: ſhe waited upon the obſequies of the commonwealth; but after, ſhe could not be detained by any human means or power, although the emperors of the world were many of them the profeſſed patrons of the ſciences. In this laſt age there is a light reflected from the two bright æras I have mentioned, which now ſhines upon the weſtern world. I call it a reflected light, becauſe the powers of the ſoul do not revive in concert as formerly, and diſplay an uniform force of genius, but the fine arts appear amongſt us exactly in proportion to the ſtandards we have left from the antients. Muſic being totally loſt, we have but faint, diſunited, and accidental traces of the mighty powers of it.

it. Painting, elegance, and oratory, are in a ſtate of mediocrity, if not below it. But poetry, which is ſo ſtrong and ſuſceptible in the human breaſt, and ſculpture, in both of which we have ſo many fine models from the antients, are arrived at a higher degree of perfection; although in both, we ſeé the antients at a vaſt diſtance before us, and come near to perfection only in proportion as we imitate well, and catch ſomewhat of their original ſpirit.

A. I thought we excelled all ages in every branch of knowledge, and in all arts. I am impatient to know the reaſon of our inferiority. I want to know ſeveral things together, for fear I ſhould forget them. What was the reaſon of the riſe of the fine arts in Greece and Rome? and why did they go away ſo abruptly, without any reſpect or complaiſance for kings and emperors?

D. So

D. So many great men have failed in the diſcoveries you require, that all a perſon who attempts them can reaſonably hope for, is to gueſs well. The method I ſhall purſue, in order to ſatisfy you, is to take a cloſe view of the circumſtances in which the ſublime arts were produced; and from them to deduce the effects with as much probability as they will bear: your knowledge of Greek and Roman hiſtory will make what I have to ſay eaſy to you. You may obſerve, that the fine arts appeared in perfection only in free ſtates; and that when freedom fell, the arts alſo languiſhed and expired with it, in ſpite of all endeavours to the contrary, and left nothing behind, but a cold imitation of the original creating genius that inſpired artiſts. Yet it is neceſſary to obſerve, that if the birth of arts depended on liberty alone, they would grow up pretty ſimilarily in all democracies. The event ſhews, that there are other

other requiſites neceſſary, which concurred in Greece, but no where elſe, in the ſame auſpicious degree.

The fine arts only arrived to perfection in free countries, becauſe liberty is the very ſoul, and inſpiring idea of the arts. Let us unfold this truth gradually, that we may conceive it well. I obſerved before, that thoſe arts depend on the mind of man for their value; and I alſo hinted often, that there is a certain ſublimity of genius common to them all. Here then are two known points of union. Freedom beſtows on man an uncommon elevation and dignity of ſoul, whoſe ſymptoms are very ſtriking. The members of free ſtates have always looked upon themſelves as a ſpecies of men far above the ſubjects of monarchies. This haughty idea is inculcated by habit; it is ſucked in with their milk; it is the burden of the wondrous tales told to their liſtening

liſtening youth; it is nurſed by example and precept, until it becomes an enthuſiaſm that poſſeſſes the whole imagination. Thoſe who are acquainted with the Roman and Grecian orators, know that they ſpoke in defence of liberty with a ſacred tranſport and warmth that approached to rapture; and their patriots, inſpired by the ſame ſpirit, performed actions that aſtoniſhed nations, and ſeemed above human power. This ſublime idea, that flamed and lightned in the oration, and gave ſupernatural force to the patriot, was undoubtedly the ſame that beamed ſo brightly on the imagination of the ſtatuary and painter, and ſtruck the lyre with ſuch divine rage; but when liberty fell, this glorious dignity of ſoul was no more, and the arts fell to a ſervile imitation, when the celeſtial idea that gave them power expired. But however haughty the members of democracies may be, this divine ſpirit being

equally

equally oppreſſed in all men, by the avocation of their ſtate, and their neceſſities, it will remain liſtleſs and inanimated even in a free ſtate, until ſeveral fortunate circumſtances concur to warm it into life and operation.

A. Dear ſir, let us come to Greece as faſt as we can, and ſee the circumſtances that concurred there ſo happily to produce the fine arts.

D. I told you, madam, I ſpeak only in doubt; but no appearance of truth ought to be neglected in this curious enquiry. We are looking back to an age, when agriculture and the other arts of plenty and eaſe were lately introduced into Greece: the acquiſition of the neceſſaries of life allowed time for reflection; and luxury, which even then was at a great height in Aſia, had not yet found the way into Europe. In this ſtate the

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ſimple and natural always lie near men's thoughts.

The Greeks had received the firſt hints in painting and ſtatuary from Egypt; but theſe arts ſerved in Egypt only to mark down important notes, and public regulations, by hieroglyphics, or viſible pictures, before the uſe of letters was diſcovered; and they were conſidered as inventions of public utility, but not of genius. What were ſymbols in Egypt, were looked upon in Greece as the figures of gods; and this miſtake produced new ideas in painters and ſtatuaries, that muſt prove favourable to their arts: they now thought it neceſſary to diſtinguiſh their works by their beauty and grandeur. At the ſame time muſic and poetry lay in a ſavage ſtate, but in their ſavage ſtate they were admired and cultivated.

Greece at this early age was divided into a great number of pretty ſtates, of

different origins, principles, cuſtoms, and governments, that agreed in nothing but the common ſentiments of nature, and fortunately in one language. It happened that they inſtituted frequent public aſſemblies, where the men of genius, the idle, and opulent, who had leiſure for reflection, and the moſt illuſtrious in their reſpective ſtates, met regularly, amongſt other deciſions, to judge of works of taſte, which at firſt undoubtedly were rude and coarſe. Beſide the appointed judges, curioſity collected a vaſt number of others, whom you may call the voluntary diſciples of taſte. In theſe noble aſſemblies their prejudices were confined to each community and town; and they had no common prejudice, but in favour of what was really beautiful. The univerſal judgment was therefore always right, and could be no other than the common univerſal taſte of nature: for you are never to forget, that although

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taſte be overwhelmed by prejudice, it is not loſt. The Goths had their poetry and architecture, in which the divine genius appeared bewildered, but ſtill that appearance charmed them. It is alſo neceſſary to conceive, that although all mankind lay under prejudices, their prejudices, like the teſtimony of falſe witneſſes, differed, while all agree in the ſentiments of nature. Under the auſpicious œconomy I ſpoke of, and judges ſo happily calculated, in Greece genius ſtripped off faſt, though gradually, its beggar's weeds, and ſhone forth in its native ſplendor. Falſe ornament and prejudice were detected, true beauty of every kind ſprung forth like original light, it was diſcovered with vaſt exultation, and ſpread without pains like the national language. Their very populace thought and ſpoke nobly. The Romans, about the time of the ruin of the commonwealth, were in a ſituation not very unlike this I have been

ſpeaking of: they were formed of all the known nations of the earth, and yet they all ſpoke one language. A variety in the original prepoſſeſſions, along with an univerſal communication, is the beſt circumſtance for wearing away prejudices, and for arriving at juſt conceptions of nature and beauty. Beſides, the Romans, with vaſt emulation, made the acquiſitions of Greece their own, and caught the ſprit they admired. But it muſt be confeſſed, that the Roman taſte had much of imitation, and inherited only a remnant of the creating genius of Greece. Amongſt the happy circumſtances peculiar to the native country of the muſes and the graces, I ſhould have obſerved, that an excellency in the arts always procured diſtinction and honours in the ſtate, which in free governments, where numbers enjoy a ſhare of the ſovereign power, is a warmer incentive to emulation, than a monarch has to beſtow.

Artiſts

Artiſts in Greece reflected honour on the ſtates they belonged to, and were almoſt idolized by thoſe ſtates.

In ſuch a noble conteſt of genius, in which every ſtep was calculated to unveil the ſublime beauties of the mind, men immediately came to imitate nature. The pictures and images expreſſed and moved, the paſſions of muſic were diſcovered, and oratory armed itſelf with the mighty powers of the ſoul. After the beautiful and affecting, appeared the ſublime: and the human ſpirit was ſupriſed to hear the divine voice of poetry raiſed ſo high: it was ſupriſed to ſee its unutterable ſentiments fixed upon marble, and a grandeur diſcloſed in the different provinces of genius by far ſuperior to the originals in nature. But it would be abſolutely impoſſible for the mind to take this lofty flight in the imitative arts, if their ideas of the human ſpirit, which is the object

of thoſe arts, was not vaſt and enthuſiaſtic. The arts in ſupreme beauty are the inſpiration of a ſoul ſurrounded with grandeur, breathing virtue and liberty, whoſe tone of voice is celeſtial, and whoſe attitudes expreſs a divine habit of mind. While this ſpirit exiſted in Greece and Rome, their patriots were demi gods: the poet's idea produced tragic and epic heroes, who emulated their deities. The painter and ſculptor ventured to bring gods to view in the human form, expreſſive of the divine character; and muſic was compoſed, that called up the paſſions with ſovereign authority, and led the ſoul captive by a regulated order of ſounds. It is a loſs to me, that you are not acquainted with Demoſthenes: the inſpiring ſpirit that raiſed him and the other antient orators to ſo high a degree of importance, is immediately diſcovered to conſiſt in this dignity and immenſe value put upon human virtue and freedom. As

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ſoon as the liberties of Greece and Rome were deſtroyed; when the value of human nature ſunk, and deſpotic governments brought guilt and ſervitude together into view, then the divine enthuſiaſm and boldneſs that attended on liberty expired; and the arts, whoſe real object was the haughty and ſublime ſpirit of man, fell together irretrievably. After which, genius could only imitate the works of the antients, and produce a cold beauty, deſtitute of the original ſacred energy.

A. I have heard you with great attention; every thing you have ſaid gives me cauſe to greive for the loſs of the liberties of almoſt the whole world. What beauty! what grandeur! what invention did they bring to mankind? O ye tyrants of the earth, how have ye defaced human nature! What a happineſs is it to be born in a country of liberty!

D. You have got a view of the fair ſide of human nature. If there were not ſome mighty inconveniencies that attended liberty, ſuch is the fondneſs of the world for it, that any man who durſt aſſume the ſovereignty over his fellow-creatures, would be torn in pieces by his own relations and domeſtics; and every perſon on earth would prove a Brutus to him. The truth is, if the dignity and virtue aſſumed by the republican were real, the whole race of man would be free, and there would be little occaſion for government: but natural dignity and virtue are only fine ſpectres, that haunt and delight the ſoul, like the poet's viſions. For, in fact, man's ſtate, his circumſtances, and vices, make ſubjection neceſſary for him, and oblige him to bear a yoke he hates. If indeed he were preſſed by no appetites, and invaded by no evils, or had always at hand a ſupply of enjoyments, he would be a very innocent creature, he would form no deſigns to diſturb

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his neighbour's repoſe, and would require but few laws to reſtrain him: he would have no temptation to violate his intellectual taſte of virtue and dignity; and the golden age, which in idea looks ſo delightful, would appear in reality on the earth. But while man is a prey to evils, and to appetites, which may be allayed at his neighbour's coſt, his natural inclinations, to which he is impelled by his wretchedneſs, is to treſpaſs upon thoſe who are poſſeſſed of what he wants; and if he be not able to procure them by force, he does not ceaſe to covet them, and attempt to acquire them by fraud. This is the ſecondary natural ſtate of man, that ariſes from his external circumſtances and wants, which make a ſtate of ſubjection and ſociety neceſſary, to reſtrain him from perpetual warfare and rapine, in all communities where ſome men are rich and others poor; for it is neceſſary to obſerve, that amongſt ſavages, where there is no permanent

poſſeſſion,

poſſeſſion, and little to be coveted, there the fetters of government are unneceſſary.

A. I did not ſpeak againſt ſubjection, but againſt tyranny and ſlavery. I ſuppoſe it is not the liberty of wild beaſts that republicans ſeek for, but a moderate government; and that they only avoid tyranny. The Roman and Grecian commonwealths, who carried the dignity of human nature ſo high, were real ſocieties, and governed by laws; ſo that there is no neceſſity to be unreſtrained, in order to be free.

D. The condition of mankind in an improved and opulent ſtate, requires reſtraint; and by laws of neceſſity as ſtrong as fate, they cannot live a day in ſafety without it; their fears and danger therefore, notwithſtanding their darling love of freedom, extort obedience from them; and at the moment they have attained that full liberty that leaves no more to

deſire,

deſire, make the moſt inſulting degree of tyranny neceſſary to ſave them from civil war and mutual carnage. What I was ſpeaking of, was the contention between ſubjection and that liberty which is the beloved object of the ſons of freedom; and to conceive what this really is, let us take in the whole ſeries of conduct of paſt republicks, in vindication of liberty; and we ſhall find that no people "ever broke from monarchy, or the go- "vernment of a few, and adopted the po- "pular form, ſtopped at any ſtep ſhort of anarchy; but regularly, and with a precipitate inclination, proceeded to demoliſh, ſtep by ſtep, every prerogative of the ruling powers, until they came to that level, which it is impoſſible to enjoy in an opulent ſtate. If the Romans, the Carthaginians, the Athenians, and every other popular ſtate that ever exiſted, proceeded alike, directly and regularly, to untie every band of government, until they

they fell into diſorder and anarchy, and made a tyranny neceſſary, to ſave them from the miſeries of endleſs civil war; it cannot be doubted, but the real object of their deſires is that liberty, of which human nature is always enamoured, and ever incapable of poſſeſſing. Men are very often hurried on, by the violence of their paſſions, without ſeeing their ends, or ſuffering themſelves to take a view of the landing-place, to which they tend; and reaſon, that eternal volunteer in the ſervice of the paſſions, only ſerves to find pretences and excuſes, to juſtify the inclinations. The parliament who attacked king Charles I. never ſuſpected that they were ruſhing into anarchy: they felt the grievance of government; by little and little they eaſed themſelves of their burden; they graſped at power; every advance they made towards freedom only made the remainder of ſubjection intolerable to them: but the

the minute they acquired the full poſſeſſion of liberty, the tyranny of Cromwell became neceſſary, to ſave them from cutting each others throats.

Monteſquieu obſerves, that factions and contention are eſſential to free ſtates. He ſaw plainly the fact, but was not quite ſo well apprized of the cauſe; for nothing can be a clearer evidence, that the freedom men deſire, cannot be reconciled with any permanency to the human ſtate, than that in all ſocieties who adopt the principles of liberty, there is a perpetual ferment and ſtrife, until thoſe principles be ejected out of the conſtitution. The oſtraciſm of the Athenians, and the proſcriptions of the Romans, demonſtrate the natural infirmity of their governments, and the want of a ſufficient ruling power. Popular ſtates are generally paſt remedy, before the decay be ſuſpected; as their final

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end approaches, factions bring on a continual fever, that tends to deſtroy a frame that cannot be preſerved; and then another form of government, which is always deſpotic, ſucceeds. Nothing is more obvious, than that the government of Rome was vitally deſtroyed ſome years before Cæſar won the deciſive battle of Pharſalia. It was not his ambition ruined the commonwealth, but the fall of the commonwealth, which that vigilant politician ſaw inevitable, incited his ambition. The prerogatives of the ruling powers were in his time utterly exhauſted, yet were the Romans at no other age ſo univerſally mad for liberty; by the encouragement of which ſpirit, that great ſtateſman brought the republic to its final ruin. There is a truth neceſſary to be taken notice of, which Addiſon in his Cato has concealed with great care: it is, that Cato was the tory and cavalier

of

of his time, who ſtood up for prerogative; and that Cæſar, while he was planning the deſtruction of the republic, was the whig and patron of liberty, who took every opportunity to extend the privileges of the people, in order to heighten the diſorder, that was then too far gone. Pompey, who was before Cæſar the patron of the people, took exactly the ſame method, for the ſame reaſon; and from the event, we may infer, that there are no limits to the deſire of freedom ſhort of the deſtruction of government; and that there is no ſtage of government, in which men are more impatient for new degrees of liberty, than when the commonwealth is upon the point of diſſolution, for want of ſufficient authority.

A. This is really inhuman, to give me ſuch a fine idea of liberty, and then to daſh it to the ground. But ſince the liberty men really ſeek and deſire is not at-

assignable, hence comes it to pass that the world has such an eager passion for it.

Do you recollect what I told you a while ago, that subjection is the necessary issue of vice; and that true virtue and dignity require no obedience to laws. Liberty is the natural endowment of innocence; consequently a right to liberty infers virtue and dignity, which the republican always lays open claim to: whilst, on the other hand, subjection is the clearest evidence of a vicious nature, and openly impeaches the worth and dignity of man. Here you may easily conceive, why an elevated deportment, and also the tranquil and softened appearance of an easy mind, become parts of the elegance we admire. They are the pictures or symbols of internal virtue and innocence, which are the real ornaments of man.

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elevated Deportment, and the
softened appearance of a
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To conceive a juſt idea of the paſſion of liberty, it is neceſſary to make an eſtimate of the powers of human pride and conſcience, which form that paſſion. No one is able to bear a reproachful idea of himſelf, except thoſe few Chriſtians who are reſolved in earneſt to attack their own vices, and to make the ſacrifice required by the goſpel. We ſee the reſt of the world making it the chief art of life, and employing the moſt refined management, to produce to view an amiable picture of themſelves. Various treatiſes have been written by divines and philoſophers, on the manifold and impervious operations of pride; and yet no one ever perhaps had an idea of the extent of genius, and variety of artifice, by which pride conceals the corruption of our hearts. The fanatic indeed, in general terms, acknowledges the depravity and wretchedneſs of his nature; but even this vague acknowledgement is ſeldom made, until he has

perſuaded himſelf that he is actually purified by the particular favour of Providence. Pride is not thus employed in order to conceal us from others only; its principal addreſs is to hide us from ourſelves, and to ſave us from the inſufferable feelings of our own depravity, miſery, and meanneſs. I join miſery and meanneſs to depravity, becauſe we have a tacit ſenſe of their aſſociation: we are aſhamed of a vile and wretched ſtate as if it were our own fault; our bluſhes for poverty ſhew that in ſentiment we acquit Providence of the evils of life, and place them at our own doors, although reaſon be unable to trace our miſery from our crimes: we alſo conceive a relation between merit and happineſs; for which reaſon people generally affect the appearance of happineſs. In conſequence of the attempt men make to impoſe on themſelves, it is that we are generally ſtrangers to the elaborate operations and artifices of our own *pride*, even when it is moſt buſily employed;

played; for, the ſame reaſons that make us deceitful in this matter make us alſo deſirous of remaining ſtrangers to the deceit; we are not willing to know, that we are hiding the corruption, whoſe exiſtence we would fain make a ſecret to ourſelves.

Now, in liberty, man aſſerts the innocence and dignity he adores; he revolts againſt reſtraint and ignominy; he lays claim to an upright nature, and diſclaims with infinite hatred the miſery and vice that make a deſpotic government neceſſary to chain him down. The real grandeur and worth inferred by liberty, to man immerſed in the vice he loves, impatient of ſhame, and liable to the outrage of conſcience, is like the ſuſpenſion of Prometheus's vulture. It lifts him out of meannels and dejection; it ſooths him with a proſpect of native excellence; it drives ſervile fear at a diſtance; it enlarges and ennobles his ſoul;

it inſpires him with language and attitudes that aſtoniſh and raviſh, and with ſublime and celeſtial ideas that bear him far above the human ſtate. What a pity it is that ſuch beauteous viſions have no reality but in the imagination; that the ſubjection we fly is as neceſſary, as our vice and miſery are real; and that the virtue and dignity aſſumed by the haughty republican, is falſe and ſpurious, ſupported by a mean hypocriſy, and a pride that deceives and lies!

A. Enough, enough; do not triumph in my affliction; I am an Engliſh woman, and love liberty; why do you trample with ſuch inſult on what is ſo dear to me?

D. Do not miſtake me, madam, I love liberty with an enthuſiaſtic paſſion, but I am well aſſured it cannot be enjoyed in opulent improved ſtates: I alſo admire the noble

noble idea of human nature; but I know it is deceitful and falſe, and that man is by nature a vicious and miſerable being, doomed to ſubjection, ſufferings, and ignominy. Let us follow the patriot hero who has reſcued his country from ſlavery, ſurrounded with immortal glory, and covered with laurels ever-green, the emblems of eternity; and look upon him in the bed of ſickneſs, oppreſſed with vile old age, or aghaſt and panting under the ſtroke of death the conqueror, and aſk ourſelves is this the end of glory? But be not caſt down, madam; life is ſhort and fleeting, and it is fated to inſult and diſtreſs by a hand we cannot reſiſt: and indeed ſeeing that eternity lies before us, it is very happy for us, that it is not in the preſent world this fine appetite is to be ſatisfied. The connection between the fine arts and freedom, brought on the reflections I made on the nature of government, which were neceſſary to lead you to the following

fine arts: I muſt pray you to obſerve carefully, that the Chriſtian religion takes the fall of man, and its corrupt ſtate for its foundation, and ſtrictly requires of us a deep ſenſe of our natural wretchedneſs and depravity. It is beyond the power of thought to form ſo ſtriking a picture of human corruption as what is exhibited to us by the death of the Son of God. We may reflect upon it as long as we pleaſe, but the warmeſt imagination will never be able to reach, or comprehend, the boundleſs iniquity, that this immane ſacrifice ſuggeſts. The fixed deſign and tenor of revelation is to imbue us with a ſenſe of our miſery and vice, to render us lowly and humble in our own eyes, and to ſubdue the deluſive idea of our own excellence and worth. For this end, it inculcates ſelf-denial, penitence, contrition, and prayers, all of them the children of humility and ſelf-condemnation. The conception it gives us of the human ſtate is very *mortifying*. You ſee already, without farther

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ristianity.

ther preamble, that politeneſs whoſe end it is to make the people we converſe with pleaſed with themſelves, is a dangerous commerce, that the beauties of elegance are ſuſpicious and falſe; and that the haughty dignity aſſumed by the Greeks and Romans was a radical oppoſition to Chriſtianity. Here you may behold, open to your view, the rooted and implacable enmity that muſt neceſſarily ſubſiſt between the ſpirit of man, and Chriſtianity; between the law of God, that draws our happineſs from humility, and the principle that elevates and flatters the human heart. You ſee Chriſtianity, like a deſpotic and mercileſs tyrant, ſtrip off from man all his natural beauty and merit; and you ſee the reaſon, why lord Shafteſbury, and other writers who inſiſt on the natural dignity of man, become proportionably enemies to Chriſtianity. When we take into conſideration the true proſpect of our religion, we know in a moment, why Chriſtian ſaints, who were

Politeneſs its dangerous paſſive Tendency.

paſſive and meek ſufferers, and were humble and lowly in their own eyes, are improper ſubjects of tragedy, epic poetry, ſtatuary, or painting; and why modern poets are obliged to bring heathen heroes on the ſtage, and give their favourite characters the haughty heathen ſentiments of virtue; by which means they ſpeciouſly undermine the principles of Chriſtianity, and debauch the heart, by the beautiful pictures they draw of natural dignity and grandeur of ſoul.

A. Cruel man! to ſet all I admire, and all I reſpect, at war in my breaſt; to give me a fear and horror of the virtue and dignity I almoſt adore; to debaſe Chriſtianity, and to ſet all that is noble and great in oppoſition to it. This is ſurely to ſeduce me from religion, and make me fling myſelf for relief on Deiſm. How much kinder would it be in you, to reconcile religion and the elevating

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ſentiments that give us joy and pleaſure in our exiſtence.

D. I might have done ſo, it is true, and decked out a flattering religion, agreeable to the modern taſte; for which almoſt every one would give me ſincere thanks; but then it would not be real Chriſtianity. However, let me obſerve, that Chriſtianity gives a much finer proſpect than it takes away; it only takes away a ſeducing, falſe, and painted picture of human excellence; but in exchange, it lifts the the curtain of futurity, and ſhews you a proſpect of human glory and beauty, that will never fade, ſuperior to the vile inſults of old age, to fortune, tyranny, or the grave. Although the ſpurious picture of our own virtue gives us more gratification and pride, yet the ideas of Chriſtianity are infinitely more ſublime and affecting. The vaſteſt imagination poſſeſſed

poſſeſſed by any of the human race, that has come to our knowledge, was undoubtedly Homer's; yet when moſt on fire, how poor and inferior are his ideas of divine power, compared to thoſe of the Scriptures; and it is when he approaches to the Chriſtian ideas, that his conceptions of the Gods are truly divine. The ſoul of man alſo, in ruins and depravity, is an object much more noble, and alſo more affecting than the heathen hero, although not ſo flattering or beautiful. We all feel a deep ſenſe of our native miſery, and the truth breaks in upon us from every quarter; although we hide it like midnight conſpirators, and dare not breathe it to our own hearing. It breaks in upon us in the midſt of worldly pomp and pride, and appears very conſpicuouſly in the puerile felicity we feel in the falſe ſhew of dreſs, the falſe dignity, honour, and eaſe we aſſume; all of which we know to be counterfeit and deceitful. Nothing diſcovers

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the conſcious ſenſe we have of our wretchedneſs more than our eagerneſs to get it out of view. The deiſt ſhews his feeling of guilt, while he fortifies his ſenſual heart with endleſs ſophiſms drawn round it, while he ſeeks to elude conſcience, by arguments evidently ſnatched up by diſtreſs and deſpair. It is the internal perception of human miſery, and of a miſgiving conſcience, that gives irreſiſtible force to the wild rhapſodies of fanatics. It is in vain to reaſon with them againſt a ſentiment they really feel and experience; and their diſcourſes are infectious, becauſe all mankind feel juſt as they do. The fears of ſuperſtition are ſentiments of the mind, which, like all other inſtinctive ſentiments, cannot be tried at the bar of reaſon, and yet are better eſtabliſhed, and more preſent than the concluſions of reaſon. When a horſe diſcovers a lion breaking into the paſtures, and moving towards him, he beholds in his form and terrific motions,

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reſentment as they uſually do againſt the ſuperſtitious and ſcrupulous, who otherwiſe are only objects of compaſſion.

It is certain, that Chriſtianity, from the proſpect it give us of our corruption and ruin, and the force it receives from our internal ſentiments, is capable of more affecting and more ſublime oratory, than the heathens were able to conceive; but then it is terrific and unpleaſing to human nature, like the ſea in ſtorms about a mariner, who, from his little ſkiff, that every moment ſeems to be overwhelmed, views the noble dreadful ſcene; but views it in ſuch anxiety as deſtroys the beauty.

Chriſtians alſo ought, by all the rules of theory, to excel the heathens in muſic, whoſe religious ideas are ſo ſuperiorly paſſionate and noble. It is certain, that Chriſtianity naturally familiarizes us to the great, the affecting, and plaintive

paſſions

paſſions that form the epic part of harmony; and it may be aſſerted with ſome degree of confidence, that wherever the taſte of muſic is revived, it will aſſiſt in awaking the other powers of genius, and impreſſing the mind with a ſublime habit of thinking. In ſtatuary and painting, Chriſtians have no proſpect of equalling the heathens. Paſſion and pride are the very ſoul of painting; what recourſe then has the artiſt, when he draws the great models of Chriſtianity, whoſe glory it is to ſuffer injuires with patience, and to ſtifle the effects of pride, its revenge, its diſcontent, its majeſty, and haughty port? I before obſerved, that the ſpirit of Chriſtianity is not favourable to tragedy; and I believe I may add, that tragedy will never appear in ſplendor, where men's ideas of human worth and merit are formed from genuine Chriſtianity.

Since I have ſpoken of the effects of chriſtianity on the fine arts, it is not wholly beſide my deſign, to obſerve, what effect infidelity, which gains ground over all thoſe parts of Europe, where a difference in religion hath obtained, muſt have on them. From what I have ſaid, it appears pretty evident, that where religion is turned out, there all the arts, and taſte itſelf, muſt utterly ſet in darkneſs and vaniſh. The heathen religion, however abſurd, imparted thoſe noble ideas we find in the heathen works of genius; and religion is ſo neceſſary to preſerve grandeur of thought, that Lucretius was obliged, in his poetry, to pay his devotions to the gods he annihilated in his arguments. Indeed the ſublime cannot ſubſiſt without the awful and mighty views of religion; on which account great poets, whatever were their private opinions, were always in their works men of eminent piety. On the contray, as

infidelity advances and chills the enthuſiaſm of the mind, the divine and noble ideas muſt periſh in poetry, oratory, ſculpture, and painting. However enthuſiaſm be applied, it originally belongs to religion, and muſt periſh where religion is loſt: genius therefore, which under Gothic obſcurity was only oppreſſed and overwhelmed, but ſtill ſtruggled, muſt ſubmit to infidelity, and lie quietly in the grave: Epicuriſm, or heathen infidelity, came into repute juſt when the arts fell in Greece and Rome. I ſhould have obſerved before that Chriſtianity gives the beſt proſpect of that equality, that conſtitutes the moſt valuable part of freedom. Where the greateſt poſſible freedom is enjoyed, there muſt be in opulent ſtates, a ſubordination, and the croud muſt be for ever diſtreſſed in their private circumſtances: but the chriſtian religion puts all upon a level; it opens

views of glory to the moſt wretched, and ſtamps every ſoul with infinite value.

But when Amelia appears loſt in thought and penſive in reflection, it is time to put an end to the diſcourſe that occaſions her concern. I ſhall only mention in as few words as poſſible, the reſult of what we read, and of what we have juſt now ſaid. There are in the ſoul original ſentiments, which, when man has leiſure to turn his attention to them, form his diſtinguiſhing character, his genuine taſte and judgment: theſe ſentiments, together with the elegant arts they give riſe to, and his obſtinate affectation of worth and dignity, all diſcover illuſtrious marks of regal grandeur in the ſoul: this beloved grandeur we would fain aſſume in this life, for preſent paſſion naturally ſeeks preſent enjoyment; and while we are delighted with the ſublime idea of human nature, we fondly deſire that liberty which

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is the birthright of innocence: but to confound and humble us, human corruption attends for ever, and ſcourges man back into vile ſubjection, with the terrors of anarchy, confuſion, murders, and inſecurity. Society and laws are not the effects of choice, but of bitter neceſſity, that never ſuffered any people to remain in a ſtate of freedom, where they had any poſſeſſions to be coveted: the ſtern decree of bondage, along with the inclemencies of life, and its variety of wants and miſeries, inform us in the language of the Almighty, that we are ruined, guilty, and condemned; conſequently, that our pride and oppoſition to ſubjection, are preſumption, rebellion, and ſin. The heathen religion, which allowed the reality of human rectitude and virtue, and appropriated the enthuſiaſtic views to this life, gave room to genius to work miracles in free ſtates, where the grandeur of human nature became a principle of action.

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But Chriſtianity turns our ſublime views from this world to their proper ſcene, to a future life, and confines the flight and heroiſm of the mind to devotion, fortitude in ſuffering, patience, and to a noble conqueſt of the paſſions.

A. The fine arts, I am convinced, bear a relation to a ſtate in which we are not at preſent. I ſee plainly, although that ſtate be ſurrounded with clouds, which deny a near view of it, yet that it is a ſtate of amazing rapture and joy, and that the fine arts are indubitable proofs of the unſpeakable ſublimity of the ſpirit of man. Upon the whole, the proſpect you have given me, I own is great; but it is alſo melancholy and terrible. I am convinced that the heathen ideas of human virtue and grandeur were falſe and low; yet they are very engaging, and I quit them with reluctance. I think I am like Eve taking her laſt leave of the garden of

heroiſm of a Chriſtian, is confin
evotion, fortitude in Suffering, a
d to a noble Conqueſt of the

Eden, with the whole world in proſpect before her, and heaven in her hope. However unbounded her new inheritance, and noble the promiſes ſhe received, yet ſhe could not forbear looking back with a ſigh, and feeling a ſecret inclination to remain.

THE END.

So soft as seems the fleecy sky
What time days ardent heat declin
For the from her mild indulgent eye,
fair kindness self reflected shines

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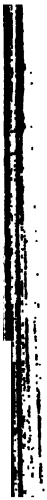
In every look, in every smile
New beauties meet the enraptured sight
and thrill with loves beguiling wile
the captive soul to wild delight.